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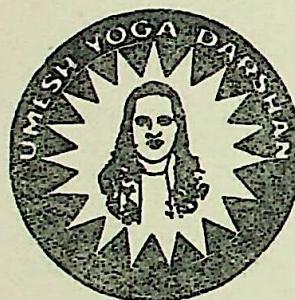
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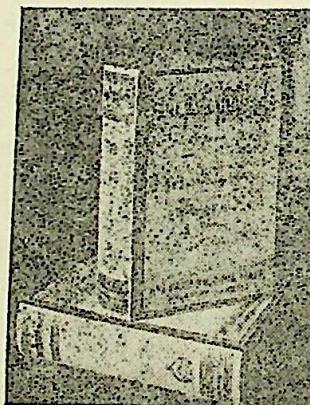
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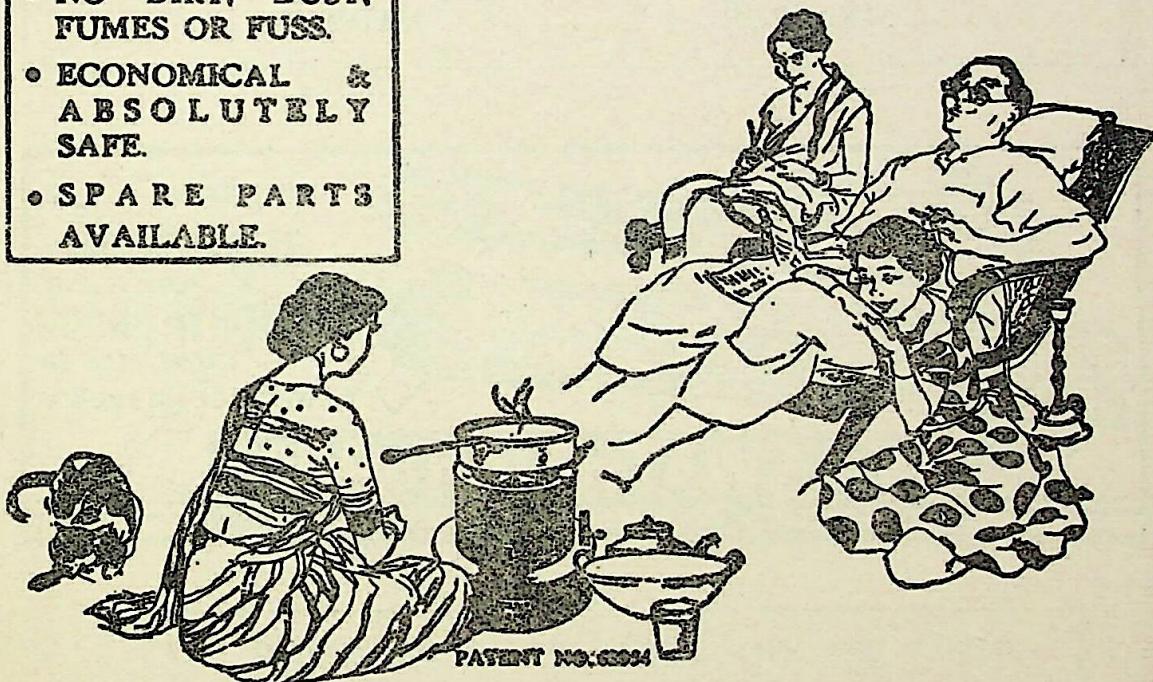
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.... Be bold and face  
 The Truth! Be one with it! Let visions cease.  
 Or, if you cannot, dream but truer dreams,  
 Which are Eternal Love and Service Free.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

# THE VEDANTA KESARI

VOL. LIII

APRIL 1967

No. 12

## PARAMĀRTHASĀRA

हयमेधसहस्राण्यप्यथ कुरुते ब्रह्मातलक्षाणि । परमार्थविन्न पुण्यैर्न च पापैः स्पृश्यते

विमलः ॥ ७७ ॥

77. The man of realization being pure,<sup>1</sup> is untouched by merit or demerit whether he performs a thousand horse-sacrifices or kills a hundred thousand brahmins.

<sup>1</sup> Free from the impurity of nescience.

मदकोपहर्षमत्सरविषादभयपरुषवर्ज्यवाग्बुद्धिः । निःस्तोत्रवषट्कारो जडवद्विचरेदगाधमतिः ॥ ७८ ॥

78. One who has the knowledge of the Unfathomable<sup>1</sup> acts as if inert,<sup>2</sup> free from conceit, anger, elation, jealousy, despondency, fear, or violence,<sup>3</sup> as if devoid of speech and intellect,<sup>4</sup> and without offering any hymns or performing any sacrifices.

<sup>1</sup> *The unfathomable* is Brahman who is profound, very difficult to know, infinite, and is of the nature of bliss.

<sup>2</sup> *Inert* is impliedly used (*upalakṣanam*) for 'as if inert, insane or like a ghoul'. In the *Bṛhadvārtika* it is said :

बुद्धतत्त्वस्य लोकोऽयं जडोन्मत्तपिशाचवत् । बुद्धतत्त्वश्च लोकानां जडोन्मत्तपिशाचवत् ।

'For a knower of reality this world appears as inert, as insane or as a ghoul and he in turn seems to the people as if inert, insane or like a ghoul.'

<sup>3</sup> *Conceit* of scholarship, of pious observances, meritorious acts and the like. *Anger* is the state of intolerance of the mind against the enemy. *Elation* is mind's hilarity which comes out of having gained what is pleasing. *Jealousy* is the trait of not being able to bear others' prosperity. *Despondency* is depression of the mind due to not obtaining what is coveted or getting saddled with what is uncoveted. *Fear* from the king, the people and the Vedas. *Violence* towards other beings.

<sup>4</sup> *Devoid of speech and intellect*, i.e., one whose speech and modifications of the mind have been merged in the Praṇava and its implied subject Brahman.

उत्पत्तिर्नाशवर्जितमेवं परमार्थमुपलभ्य । कृतकृत्यसकलजन्मा सर्वगतस्तिष्ठति यथेष्टम् ॥ ७९ ॥

79. Thus<sup>1</sup> having realised<sup>2</sup> the Supreme Reality<sup>3</sup> devoid of origination and destruction, having accomplished the object of life, and made it fruitful, a person, being present everywhere, lives joyfully as he wishes.

<sup>1</sup> Thus as stated in the 10th verse of this treatise.

<sup>2</sup> उपोपसर्गसामीट्ये तत् पतीचि समाप्यते ।

The prefix *upa* means near, hence 'brings near' here means realizes the Supreme reality as one's Self.

<sup>3</sup> The Supreme Reality which is of the nature of the *Puruṣa* and is beyond *Prakṛti*.

NOTE : The next four verses depict as to what happens to a *Jīvanmukta* when his body falls.

व्यापिनमभिन्नमित्थं सर्वात्मानं विधूननानात्वम् । निरूपमपरमानन्दं यो वेद स तन्मयो

भवति ॥ ८० ॥

80. He who has realized the pervasive one,<sup>1</sup> that has transcended manifoldness,<sup>2</sup> is of incomparable supreme Bliss,<sup>3</sup> is the self of all, as such, and so non-different (from the knower)<sup>4</sup> becomes that Itself.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The *pervasive one* ; the Supremely great one which is variously described by the *Śruti* texts. 'That is not sound, not touch, without form, immutable, likewise It is not taste, and not smell either, ever existent, without beginning or end, beyond the *Mahat*, and eternal, realizing That one is freed from the jaws of death ?' अशब्दमस्पर्शमरूपमद्ययं तथाऽरसं नित्यमगन्धवत् च यत् । अनाद्यनन्तं महतः परं श्रुतं निचार्य तन्मृत्युमुखात्प्रमुच्यते । *Katha Up.* 1.3.15.

<sup>2</sup> 'The Existence before creation was one only without a second', says the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (6.2.1.).

<sup>3</sup> 'Know Brahman to be bliss. That is his Supreme bliss. Other creatures live by an infinitesimal fraction of this bliss alone.' (*Br. Up.* 4.3.32).

<sup>4</sup> The knower realizes his oneness with *Paramātman*, *Vāsudeva*. Seeing duality is discouraged by the *Śruti*, as in the following passage. 'One who meditates on the deity as separate from oneself that one does not know. He is as cattle to the gods.' अथ योऽन्यां देवतामुपस्तेऽन्योऽसावन्योऽहमिति न स वेद । यथा पशुरेवं स देवानाम् । (*Br. Up.* 1.4.10) Also the result of realization of this truth of one's non-difference from Reality is said to be immortality. 'This your *Ātman* is immortal.'

<sup>5</sup> *He becomes that itself*, under all conditions — while living in body or after its fall.

DOUBT : How can the scriptures speak about *Vāsudeva*, the Self of all ? He is called the Self of all because He presides over all, intellect and the senses. So, He naturally cannot be contemplated by the mind, nor spoken of by the speech. It can never be said that the pot that is illumined by a lamp reveals the lamp. Likewise the mind, or the speech which is made conscious by the *Ātman* is not able to inform about it. The *Śruti* too says, 'From where unsuccessfully the speech returns with the mind.' (*Taitti. 2. 4. 1.*).

(Continued on page 530)

## A TEMPLE OF GOD

I

PEOPLE all over the world are familiar with the idea of sacred places of worship, a temple, a church, a mosque and the like. We build temples, decorate them with architectural beauty, install images, appoint proper persons to perform worship and engage people to keep the precincts clean. For as the proverb goes, cleanliness is next to godliness. Cleanliness in the exterior is an essential contributing factor to cleanliness of the interior, of the mind. A clean place spontaneously produces a soothing effect on man.

Now, what is the idea behind these temples ? Millions of people, even today in spite of the materialistic trend of the society, attend churches, temples and mosques. Why ? Because there is in man an unquenchable thirst to know the Unknown, to know the Wielder of destiny, to know the Highest Principle and to adore, and to worship It. God is that Unknown, by whatever name you may call Him. To the generality of mankind the abstract Principle is beyond comprehension. They require some concrete symbols through which they can worship Him. So images and symbols are a necessity in the religious field. To house the images temples are dedicated. If you go through the history of the founding of any temple, which has continued to cast its influence, you will find that there has been some saint, some seer who had sanctified that place with his austerities, practice of spiritual disciplines, or by his mere stay. Narada in his *Bhakti Sūtra* says, 'They (the great devotees) impart sanctity to places of pilgrimage'.<sup>1</sup> Sri Raniakrishna avers, 'God is present where people talk about Him. One feels there the presence of all holy places. Places of worship recall God alone to my mind'. Most of us

are aware of the law of association. It is equally applicable to places of worship as it is in respect of persons, and ideas. Sri Rama-krishna used to cite the example of a devotee who 'was overwhelmed with ecstasy at the sight of a babla tree. The idea flashed in his mind that the handle of the axe in the garden of the temple of Radhakanta was made from the wood of babla'. Of course these are instances where the mind has been tuned to a very high pitch. Even on a lower plane and with a little direct association the temple would bring to anyone's mind the idea of God. That is the purpose of the temples.

Further, the temple is not merely a place of congregation for all types of people. It is not meant to be utilized for social functions. It is a place of worship of God. The very idea of visiting a temple makes us feel that we should be pure. People take bath, put on washed and clean clothes and contemplating on Him they approach the deity. And if at that time he should find the surroundings are dirtied, and that neglect reigns everywhere then his mind would naturally rebel at the condition ; the idea of holiness associated with the temple would recede to the background. Today if these simple rules are forgotten and a temple becomes a place of assemblage of people for transacting business or exchange of views on mundane matters, then that temple loses its sanctity. Remember how Jesus drove the moneylenders and businessmen who were pursuing their trade even inside the temple, saying 'It is written, My house is the house of prayer : but ye have made it a den of thieves'.<sup>2</sup> Neither should man indulge in idle pastimes in places of worship. So, meticulously should one be careful in maintaining the sanctity, purity and cleanliness of a temple, of a place of worship.

<sup>1</sup> तीर्थकर्वन्ति तीर्थानि । N.B.S. 69.

<sup>2</sup> Gospel according to St. Luke. 19. 46.

## II

Now this idea of images and temples can be extended to one's own self, with much benefit, spiritually. We find that we are fettered with the limitations of the body, senses and the mind, that is, the idea that we are the body cannot be got rid of even with much effort. The ailments of the body, the miseries overwhelming the mind bring us down to think ourselves as body, or mind. There are only two ways of overcoming these concepts. By intense dispassion to all that is of the world. To treat even one's body as a meaningless burden, to be spurned. People devoted to the path of knowledge can only be successful in having such an attitude. The other method is to look upon the body as a temple of God. We have to take care not only of the outer structure but the inner *sanctum sanctorum*, i.e., not only the body but also the heart should be maintained pure, free from blemish. Otherwise how can we install the image of the Lord within ?

Sri Ramakrishna in an exquisite parable illustrates this idea. Of course he gave it out in a different context but it will not be out of place here. 'There lived in a village a young man named Padmalochan. People used to call him "Podo", for short. In this village there was a temple in a very dilapidated condition. It contained no image of God. Aswattha and other plants sprang up on the ruins of its walls. Bats lived inside and the floor was covered with dust and the droppings of the bats. The people of the village had stopped visiting the temple. One day after dusk the villagers heard the sound of a conch-shell from the direction of the temple. They thought perhaps someone had installed an image in the shrine and was performing the evening worship. One of them softly opened the door and saw Padmalochan standing in a corner, blowing the conch. No image had been set up. The temple hadn't been swept or washed. And filth and dirt lay everywhere. Then he shouted to Podo :

You have set up no image here,  
Within the shrine, O fool !  
Blowing the conch, you simply make  
Confusion worse confounded.  
Day and night eleven bats  
Scream there incessantly . . .

'There is no use in merely making a noise if you want to establish the Deity in the shrine of your heart, if you want to realize God. First of all purify the mind. In the pure heart God takes His seat. One cannot bring the holy image into the temple if the droppings of bats are all around. The eleven bats are our eleven organs : five of action, five of perception, and the mind.'<sup>3</sup>

It is true that divinity dwells within all. But as long as the heart is not made pure, how can you feel the divine presence within. Sri Ramakrishna says : It is one thing to know that there is fire in the wood and quite another to generate it by friction between two pieces of wood. It is one thing to know that milk is good for health but quite a different matter to drink and be benefited by it. Likewise it is one thing to know that we are all divine but quite another thing to realize it, experience it. We know ourselves mostly as fair or dark, of a certain height, weight and so on. What does this all denote but the body ? The body is only a vehicle for the Self to work through. It is only a structure. As the temple is no temple as long as there is no image of God installed within it, so too, so long as God is not realized within, the body is only a collection of bones, flesh and so on.

## III

Love of God is the priest of the temple in the human heart. Discrimination and dispassion can be stated to be the caretakers and cleansers of this temple. Love of God, devotion or *bhakti* is essential if God has to make any response to man's endeavours. It is said that God looks into the heart of man and not

<sup>3</sup> *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, p. 53, 3rd Edn., 1957. Pub. Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras-4.

what he says nor even what he does. He is satisfied with the smallest service done to Him with the greatest sincerity.

Sincerity is the clay out of which the bricks of the *sanctum sanctorum* of this temple are made of. When man prays sincerely to God to grant him His vision, He sends him all that is necessary for his progress. The Guru who will guide him will come and all other requirements will gather unto him by themselves. 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness ; and all these things shall be added unto you',<sup>4</sup> said Jesus. The obstacles in one's path to spiritual progress are cleared without any effort on one's part if one but seeks God earnestly. God chooses him who prays to Him earnestly and sincerely, not for things mundane but for His vision alone. It is dependence on God alone that can save us from many a fall. As Sri Ramakrishna points out, 'A boy who holds the father's hand, while walking on the ridge of a field, may slip and fall down but not when the father firmly takes hold of the boy'. And in this dependence prayer is a necessary instrument, for it cleanses the mind as well. As in the parable of Sri Ramakrishna cited already, there can be no installation of the image of God unless the heart is cleared of the dross, of the attachments to worldly things. God does not come into a place already occupied with worldly desires. 'When there is some one already in charge of the stores, the owner of the house will have nothing to do with matters concerning the store.'

Sri Ramakrishna was once asked by a devotee as to how love for God can be developed. His reply was, 'One gradually acquires love of God through the practice of chanting God's name and glories. One should not be ashamed of chanting God's holy name. As the saying goes, "One does not succeed so long as one has these three : shame, hatred and fear".' But this is what exactly prevents our progress. We are ashamed to be labelled as religious in

the present age, for religion is looked down upon as the occupation of some crazy fellows, as the opiate of the poor. How then can they who seek status and position in the social ladder openly identify themselves with religion ? This is the difficulty or embarrassing position of many. However, the law of nature cannot change whether you like it or not. The law of spiritual development too cannot be modified because it irks some. If we want a jewel, we have to pay the price or give up all hope of acquiring it.

What does Sri Ramakrishna mean by telling, 'one should not be ashamed in chanting God's holy name' ? Does he mean that we should make a display of our religiosity ? He does not. At another time he instructed the devotees : 'you will do your spiritual practices in your own mind, in a secluded place of your house or in the forest'. But it is quite a different matter if it is a congregational singing. One should not feel himself too big to chant God's name along with others.

Purification of the heart comes through reciting prayers, chanting God's name. Then alone love of God wells up. Unless one has deep affection for God it is not possible to remember Him always and until this remembrance of God becomes constant and uninterrupted, we may conclude that love of God has not taken firm root. Narada in his *Bhakti Sutras* enumerates the characteristics of Bhakti as 'the consecration of all activities by complete self-surrender to Him, and extreme anguish if He were forgotten'.<sup>5</sup> It is such supreme love of God that makes a man holy, makes his body a temple of God, in the real sense of the term. This love of God is not acquired all of a sudden. We have to work hard for it. It is the greatest treasure that man can possess. Can it then be so easily attained ?

<sup>4</sup> नारदस्तु तदर्पिताखिलाचारता तद्विस्मरणे परम  
३याकुलतेति ॥ N.B.S. 19.

<sup>4</sup> St. Mathew, 6. 33.

## IV

Dispersion for the things of the world, and discrimination between the real and the unreal, are to be cultivated to make our devotion strong and infallible. For it is impossible to hold on to God, think of Him or meditate on Him for any length of time, if we are not sure that He alone is real and all other things are unreal. The follower of the path of devotion also has to discriminate between the real and the unreal. Otherwise how can he withstand the temptations that always surround him ?

The question that raises its head at this juncture is : What shall we do with our turbulent senses ? How can we control them ? What is the way to overcome them ? The devotee of God directs the senses towards Him. In a beautiful verse a lover of God entreats his limbs and senses in this wise : ' O tongue, sing the glories of Keśava ; O mind, meditate on Murāri ; O hands, worship Śridhara ; O ears hear you the stories about Acyuta ; O eyes, see Krishna ; O feet, go to Hari's abode ; nose, smell thou the tulsi (basil leaf) offered at Mukunda's feet ; O head, bow yourself to Adhokṣaja '.<sup>6</sup> The several names we find here are of Vishnu, the great Lord, and each of them projects a picture, of some incident that occurred in one or other of His Incarnations before our mind's eye or describes His glory. Ruminating over them we become absorbed in the thought of the Lord and thus attain concentration of the mind. The more we are able to dwell on God's form and His sport the more will we be able to lift ourselves above the mundane plane. For the baser

desires will then be held in abeyance for the time being and if one pursues one's devotion without any intermittance and without any remission, these desires will slowly weaken and ultimately be wiped out.

Perhaps a doubt still lingers : It may be all right in the case of a mind which has somehow stumbled into the path but what of those persons who have not got any taste for the spiritual life, who though immersed in worldly pursuits, duties and enjoyments, have a faint liking to transcend it ? To them Sri Ramakrishna prescribes holy company to get over the disease of worldliness. ' Prayer and the company of holy men beget yearning for God. But it is not enough to be in the company of religious people only for a day. You should constantly seek it, for the disease has become chronic,' says Sri Ramakrishna. The *Bhāgavata* too extols holy company in these words : ' In this world the company of holy men even for half a minute is a covetable treasure for man '.<sup>7</sup> ' For people struggling in the terrible waters of this transmigratory existence the tranquil saint, the knower of Brahman, is the supreme resting place, even as an invulnerable boat is for a drowning man.'<sup>8</sup> Narada opines, ' But it is extremely difficult to come into contact with a great soul and to be benefited by his company ; the influence of such a one is subtle, incomprehensible and unerringly infallible in its effect '.<sup>9</sup>

It is difficult for a small spark to kindle a heap of wet wood but a roaring fire can consume even the plantain trees. Likewise by contact with the knowers of Brahman even the worst sinner can turn a new leaf in his life, though the ordinary man with a little devotion may lose even what little he possesses, if he associates with a wicked person.

<sup>6</sup> जिह्वा कीर्तय केशवं सुरारिपुं  
चेतो मज श्रीधरं ।  
पाणिद्वन्द्व समर्चयाच्युतकथा  
ओत्रद्वयं त्वं शृणु ।  
कृष्णं लोकय लोचनद्वय द्वे-  
गंच्छांश्रियुग्मालयम् ।  
जिग्र ग्राण मुकुन्दपादतुलसीं  
मूर्धन्माधोक्षजम् । *Mukundamala Stotra*, 16.

<sup>7</sup> संसारेऽस्मिन् क्षणार्थोऽपि सत्त्वसङ्गः शेवदिनूर्णाम् ।  
*Bhagavata* XI. 2. 30.  
<sup>8</sup> निमञ्ज्योन्मज्जतां घोरे भवाव्यौ परमायनम् ।  
सन्तो ब्रह्मविदः शान्ता नीर्देवाप्सु मज्जताम् ।  
*Ibid.*, XI. 26. 32.  
<sup>9</sup> महत्सङ्गस्तु दुर्लभोऽगम्योऽमोघम् । *N.B.S.* 39.

We have not only to seek holy company but simultaneously avoid evil association. For otherwise what benefit we reap from the former will be neutralized by the latter. Nay, we may be dragged down to levels lower than where we originally were. As in the instance of company so too about food should one be careful. There is a reference to food as a means to the purification of the mind in the *Upaniṣad*. 'If the food is pure one's mind becomes pure. When the mind is pure the memory remains steady. The memory remaining steady there comes release from all bondages.'<sup>10</sup> Sri Saṅkara commenting on the above passage remarks, 'Whatever is gathered in through perception and imagination is āhāra (food) for the mind. The purity of knowledge regarding these sense contacts means their being not influenced by one's defects such as attachment, aversion and infatuation.'<sup>11</sup> What Sri Saṅkara wants to convey is that purity of mind can be achieved only through giving up of attachment and aversion to worldly objects. And when that purity of thought is achieved the memory of the Lord becomes constant, and that leads to liberation.

Other interpreters of this passage of the *Upaniṣad* have taken the word āhāra in its literal sense i.e., the food that is eaten. They

<sup>10</sup> आहारशुद्धौ सत्त्वशुद्धिः सत्त्वशुद्धौ ध्रुवास्मृतिः  
स्मृतिर्लभ्ये सर्वंगंयीनां विप्रमोक्षः ।

*Chandogya Up.* VII. xxvi. 2.

<sup>11</sup> आहियत इत्याहारः शब्दादिविषयज्ञानं भोक्तुर्भीर्गायाहियते । तस्य विषयोपलब्धिलक्षणस्य विज्ञानस्य शुद्धिराहारशुद्धौ रागद्वेषमोहदोषैरसुसृष्टं विषयविज्ञानमित्यर्थः ।

Commentary of Sankara on the above passage of the *Upaniṣad*.

find three types of defects in food, viz., (1) those impure by nature, (2) impure by adulteration and (3) impure due to association. Some attention paid to these things will be really helpful for the aspirants. But we need not be too fastidious about these things, forgetting the main purpose of life, viz., God-realization. There is a song of Mirabai, the great poetess-saint of Rajasthan, which, though couched in sarcasm, points out the real discipline that leads us to God. She sings : 'O Man, it is necessary to practise spiritual disciplines, it is necessary too that you should sing the glories of God. It is incumbent that you should develop devotion to God as also love Him. What will mere outer purification by bathing daily do ? If that were only sufficient then all the creatures living in water would have seen Hari first. If living on fruits and roots could give a glimpse of Hari bats and monkeys would have it before all. If living on milk alone Hari could be attained then the young ones of all mammals would have been blessed indeed. Mira is of the firm opinion that the Darling of Nanda cannot be had without pure love'.<sup>12</sup> This shows that, though we may not discard or disregard the ordinary rules about the purity regarding food and the like, too much stress on the externals will only divert our attention from the main issue and as a consequence hamper our progress. The primary aim is to love God, for His own sake. Thus alone is the body converted into a temple of God.

<sup>12</sup> साधन करना चाहिये मनवा भजन करना चाहिये ।  
प्रेम लगाना चाहिये मनवा प्रीत करना चाहिये ।  
नित नहनसे हरिमिले तो जलजन्तु हैं ।  
फलमूल खाके हरि मिले तो बादुर बांदर है ।  
दूध पीने से हरि मिले तो बहुत वत्स बाला ।  
मीरा कहे बिना प्रेम से मिले नहीं नन्दलाला ।

## TEACHINGS OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

[A translation by SRI P. SESHA DRI (for the first time) from the Bengali book *Sri Ramakrishna Punthi* written by Akshaya Kumar Sen.]

(Continued from the previous issue)

AKSHAYA KUMAR SEN

THE advice regarding the essence of Sadhana console afflicted souls and give them hope and courage. Sri Ramakrishna used to say, 'To practise Sadhana, living the householder's life is like fighting from a fort, very safe. Stay there very carefully, quite unattached. If money is used with discrimination, it will be very beneficial in the battle of Sadhana. The mark of a real householder is that, his body alone will remain in the house while his mind will be at the feet of God. He will do his worldly duties in an unattached manner with no idea of selfish gain. His mind will always dwell on the feet of God.'

The means to remain unattached is taught thus by Sri Ramakrishna. 'The householder should remain in retreat at least a month in a year. He should incessantly think of God and pray to Him with a yearning heart. He should mentally say, "O God, I have no one in the universe to call my own. All friends and companions are only for a time. You alone are my all-in-all. You will ferry me across this perilous ocean of Samsāra. Tell me the means, distracted as I am, that will make me attain You". As long as the children are minors, they should be tended. If there be a chaste wife, she should be maintained. He should give her, by all means, spiritual instructions so long as life remains in the body. You should also provide enough for her maintenance in case she survives you. But if she be unchaste, you need not provide for her. The householder, who is a Jñāni, should observe all these. But if he is mad with the intoxication of Jñāna, he has no duties. God will think of and provide for his family members who depend on him. If a

zamindar dies leaving a minor, the Company\* immediately takes the responsibility of the care of the child and sends a guardian to look after the minor and the property. Janaka, Vyāsa and Vasiṣṭa are examples of the unattached householders. They wielded two swords with both their hands, the swords of Jñāna and Karma.

'Jñāna is like a weapon that makes for self-protection. The Jñāni sees God face-to-face. As long as Jñāna does not dawn, God will seem to be far away. By the possession of the jewel of Jñāna, He comes near. The Jñāni constantly sees God in his heart. This is one characteristic of the Jñāni. Another mark of a Jñāni is that he will never identify the self (Ātman) with the body, the two will be known as different. The coconut from which all the water has dried up, is an example. The kernel becomes separate from the shell. If a person shakes it, it gives out a slow, clattering sound. Another example is the dried stone of a mango which is two or three years old. The Jñāni roams, having become a Jīvanmukta. The state of a Jīvanmukta is that he has no connection with the pleasures and pains of the body. A further mark of a Jñāni is that, as soon as he hears the name of God, his hairs will stand on end, tears of joy will well up in his eyes and he will forget himself in rapture of bliss. His attachment to lust and money will be completely gone. His cherished object is fulfilled by seeing God. His mind has been purged of the dross of the taste for sensual pleasures. An apposite example of this is the dry match, which bursts

\* East India Company, which led to the British rule over India.

into flame as soon as it is struck ; the dense darkness is removed and the place around is lighted up. The mind, wet by sensual attachment, will never be kindled to love of God. The only means to dry that wet mind is to call on the Divine Mother with a yearning heart. If a person considers the Divine Mother as his real mother, the attachment to worldly pleasures will very soon be dried up.

‘ For the mind to remember God at the time of death, the *jīva* should resort to the means earlier. That person, who gives up his body, remembering God will never again be born. We must practise spiritual disciplines daily, having faith in His name, as the means to remember God in the end.

‘ A religious teacher’s work is very difficult. It can be done only if a person gets the authority from the Divine Mother. What power has an ordinary person to uplift others ? Uplift means *Mokṣa*, freedom from bonds, so that there may be no rebirth. God, who has created the world-entrancing *Māyā*, has the sole power to give freedom from *Māyā*’s bond. He alone, the *Sacchidananda*, is the Guru, is the Helmsman.. By His will alone, the crossing of *Māyā* is possible. If a person is fortunate enough to get a *Sadguru*, he will be soon uplifted and freed from all bondages. That person can be compared to a frog seized by a poisonous serpent. The frog does not have to struggle long in such a case and dies soon. On the other hand, if it falls under the clutches of a small snake, the frog shrieks constantly in mortal agony, as that snake can neither swallow it nor give it up. Similarly, if a *Sadguru* takes the responsibility of a person, that person’s egoism will be utterly destroyed after making two or three attempts to manifest itself. This egoism is *Māyā*, a thick covering which hides from view Krishna, the Lord. Those who fall into the hands of an unripe Guru, will never be freed from the bonds of *Samsāra*. Such a Guru and his disciples will suffer terribly like the blind led by the blind.’

Explaining the thick covering, *Māyā* or *Ahaṅkāra* (egoism), Sri Ramakrishna said, ‘ The cloud hides the sun, the eye of the

world ; similarly *Māyā* hides God. Hence the *jīvas* do not see God who is near ; *Māyā* hides Him from view. Sri Rama was walking ahead at a very short distance from Lakshmana who could, however, not see him as Sita, who may be compared to *Māyā*, was between them.’

In the presence of God how can many gods exist ? Sri Ramakrishna said, ‘ *Jīvas* are really of the very nature of *Sacchidānanda*. But they have forgotten it due to *Māyā*. The attributes of *Māyā* are many. The difference, created by the *Ahaṅkāra*, due to *Māyā*, may be illustrated by the example of a stick dropped in water. Water is one and the same but because of the stick water appears to be divided. The stick is the *Ahaṅkāra*, the *upādhi* (attribute). If you take away the stick, water will be found to be one and undivided. If you can give up this *Ahaṅkāra*, you will have the *Darshana* of God in yourself. *Jñāna* can dawn with the destruction of *Ahaṅkāra*. But the acquiring of such *Jñāna* is very, very difficult. *Ahaṅkāra* is surely absent in the person who is in *Samadhi*. When the mind rises to the seventh plane, that of *Sahasrara*, the *jīva* that says ‘ I,’ ‘ I,’ ceases to be. It is the wicked, unripe ego that says ‘ I,’ ‘ I,’ constantly. This ego is the root cause of all bondage of *samsāra*. It cannot be wholly wiped out ; hence it would be best to be in the Presence of God, retaining the consciousness of “ I am the servant of God ”.

‘ The main object of our birth is to realize God by some means or other. In the present times, *Bhakti* is the easiest path to attain Him. By any and every kind of *Bhakti*, God cannot be seen. *Prema Bhakti*, the devotion of intense love, is the way to see Him. The nature of intense love is that of a mad elephant. That elephant roams in its own way, not heeding to any prohibitions. Thus, the *Bhakta* restlessly moves about yearning for God in his intense love, breaking the chains of caste, creed, family etc. Like the *Gopis* of *Vraja* in their devotion to Krishna, he is not conscious of his body.

There is another kind of Bhakti known as Vaidhi ; it consists only in doing ceremonial works like meditation, worship, etc. If you do such works for a long time, you may get the precious gem of Rāgātmika Bhakti in course of time. When that sort of Bhakti with intense love comes, the rites enjoined in the Śāstras will be blown away like dry leaves by a violent wind ; the tree of Karma, with its strong roots, will be uprooted. "The devotee, with intense love of God transcends the Vedas ; rises to Him alone."

Sri Ramakrishna, the Guru of the world and the Kalpataru, was the refuge of the followers of all religious sects. The Śāktas, the Saivas, the Kartabhajas, the Bauls, the Vaiśnavas of various denominations, the devotees of Sri Rama, the Vedāntavādis, the Brahmos, the Sikhs, the Dervishes, Muslims, Christians and many others of various cults as well as the atheists and agnostics, who did not know the path to be followed, were gladly welcomed by him. The devotees of the outer circle and the inner circle had their minds constantly on Sri Ramakrishna. The renowned Pandits also saw in him their ideal. Gauri Pandit of Indesh was such a wise Pandit, well versed in Nyāya and a Siddha in the Tantra path. The good and virtuous Narayana Śāstri, learned in Nyāya, spent a long time in the company of the Master. The Brahmani, learned in the Śāstras, suddenly came to Dakshineswar when Sri Ramakrishna was practising Sadhana and proclaimed him as the Avatar of Sri Chaitanya, seeing in him the characteristic marks of an Incarnation. Tota Puri, who gave Sannyasa to the Master, spent eleven months with him, though that sage used to stay only three days in a place. Padmalochan, the famous court-Pandit of Burdwan, learned in various Śāstras, had his heart's desire fulfilled by the *darshan* of the Master. The great and well-known Pandit Dayananda Saraswati, remarked with regret after seeing the Samadhi of the Master that

the scholars of the Śāstras get only the sour butter milk, whereas Mahatmas like the Master eat the essence, the butter. Pandit Śāśadhar Tarkachudamani became speechless and wonder-struck at the sight of the Master. Dinabandhu Nyāyaratna of Konnagar openly acknowledged defeat at the Master's hands. The celebrated Śyāmapada rolled on the ground before the Master's feet. Sri Rama Pandit of Kunchakul, famous throughout, was sure of the fact that the Master was Bhagavan. All these wise men, the Sadhus and the Bhaktas were taught about God by the Master. The essence of the Śāstras was also revealed by him to them. His exposition was simple, in plain language so that even a child could understand. How much he worked for the good of all, giving up sleep, food and the like, needed for the sustenance of the body ! He underwent very hard Sadhanas, losing thus the strength of body. The Master's body, flesh and bones, were very tender and delicate as if made of butter. He spoke incessantly, helping eager aspirants. Once, in the rapture of Bhava, he told the Divine Mother, 'How can I by myself talk so much ? Give power to Vijaya, Girish, Ram and a few others.' He gave himself freely as a sacrifice for the good of the world. All the Sadhanas he did were for the sake of the jīvas. He exhausted all physical strength by Sadhanas. Now, he was speaking constantly for the welfare of suffering souls. The Vedas speak of the throat as the fifth plane of consciousness. If the mind stays there, a person will talk of God incessantly. In that plāne, the Master abided for the most part of the time, for teaching about God to the jīvas. Hence he felt pain now a little to the right of the throat which, in time, developed into a violent disorder. He suffered much for the good of the jīvas. The story of the 'lilas' of the Master is like nectar. By hearing and relating it supreme good will accrue and the heart will be firm in the midst of the pleasures and pains of Samsāra. Hear it diligently.

## GOD AS WITNESS

SWAMI NITYABODHANANDA

WHEN one speaks of God as the awakener and not creator of an eternal creation, one conceives God in all the glory of His Being. To create is to fall into duality, into cause and effect relationship and when we conceive God and the world in cause and effect relation, then we deprive God of His Being and the world of its spirituality. The world of creation helps us in our evolution and in the process of helping finally disappears in us by virtue of its transparency. In the mirror of our spiritual evolution we see the world reflected and we feel the duality, ourselves and the world. The experience is comparable to a dream, wherein lying in the same place, we see the world of our journey in America which in reality is in our interior. When the dream vanishes, where does that world disappear? In us, in a final act of self-transcendence. When a mirror breaks, where does the reflection go? In the thing reflected; the mirror as an object disappears but as a possibility of reflecting continues.

In the same way, in an act of Self-awareness, because we no longer hold up the mirror to the world to be reflected, it disappears into us in a final act of Self-transparence. In other words, we should give only the value of a reflection to the world and as a reflection it has transparency and must finally go out into unity with the one who held the mirror, namely ourselves.

It is our evolution that holds up the mirror to the world. Evolution presupposes time; progress demands time. Progress, change, evolution, these are the forms time takes to make us conscious of time. When we are not conscious of progress and change, then we transcend time or time stops. Then we rise above time-sense and integrate with the Intemporal (Timeless). The Timeless is God. Even as the world is the external potency of God,

time which is the web of evolution is the visible or perceptible flow of the timeless.

In the thought of St. Augustine, the great pillar of Christian theology, God is the timeless. In his Confession he develops a very interesting philosophy of time. According to St. Augustine time was created when the world was created. God is the timeless, for God was there before time began. In God there is no before and after, but only an eternal present. God's eternity is exempt from the relation of time; all time is present to Him at once. He did not precede His own creation of time, for that would imply that He was in time, whereas He stands eternally outside the stream of time.

In Vedanta God did not create time even as He did not create the world. God is the spectator, the permitter, the supporter of time — time in the three habitual divisions of past, present and future. He is the witness of time which means He is intemporal. The past is but memory, regret, repentance. And the future is but hope, expectation. Both memory and hope come to live and bear fruit in the present. There is something in us that is in perpetual hurry to draw things and perception to the present. I do something and I regret that I have not done it well, that I could have done better. This better is the present which drags to itself mercilessly the past. And this dragging manifests as 'regrets'. Is not then regret a quality of betterment that the present imposes on our past and so is 'regret' to be regretted? Surely St. Augustine will not agree with this accommodation towards 'regret'.

Then again hope and expectation which belongs to the future must cease to belong to the future and must slide into the reality of the present. We must 'father' them before projecting into the future, before they become hope and expectation.

All this shows that the present is a luminous fire that consumes both past and future. To be fully in the present is to be master of time, as past and future. God is this luminous present and that is why from Him time flows. We can even say that God is the present of things past, present of things present, and the present of things future. For God is existence, awareness of existence. The present of things past is memory, the present of things present is sight or perception and the present of things future is expectation, hope. God as the prius of all things, past and future allows things to appear and disappear.

The *Gītā* affirms that that God who is awareness of existence and thus the witness of all time is our very essence. The origin and end of things are events in our knowledge. Things appear and disappear in our knowledge. The origin and end of knowledge are never known. Even negation is a knowledge. The origins of knowledge are in the non-manifest, so too are its ends. This is not to say that we have found the beginnings and ends. But this is to say that knowledge is never absent. That means that we are never absent. We are never absent as witness. At death we are the witness of a partial negation, of an absorption of things into spirit, into silence.

The *Gītā* puts the power and virtue of being witness in striking language. It says that he who is witness is never born again. Not to be born again, has no attraction for many of us and is not an ideal condition to be aspired for. For many of us want to be reborn when this body falls. But the *Gītā* here is not speaking of a rebirth after death, but of a rebirth while living in this very body. How many times we die and are reborn with the things and people we identify with. (This is not the death the poet speaks of : 'cowards die many times before their death' says the poet. We are not cowards of that type. Rather are we metaphysical cowards.) We love somebody and when he or she disappears we say 'I am finished'. We identify with a thing so intensely that with every change of that thing we also change. In addition to the constant change, our bodies

and minds are subjected to, we die and are reborn as often as the world of causes and consequences impinge on our attention and drag us into it. In this sense, every thought is a rebirth, for it is a reaction to or result of, some other thought. Between two moments of perception of one and the same thing we die and are reborn. With every new perception we are born with the thing perceived and we die with the end of it, only to be reborn with the second perception. To put it more picturesquely, the artist dies with the stone and is reborn with the statue he makes out of the stone. We too, do the same, if we really appreciate the work of art. So then, with the death and birth of a thing we perceive, we experience also death and birth. But this birth and death is only for that part of us which lives in the cause and effect relationship domain. Not being born is an *attitude* that we can create in us and develop, by not identifying with things, with the cause and effect nexus. By non-identification we do not fall in the realm of causes and in spite of changes in our personality, we affirm the causeless and the changeless in us and we live by it.

When the *Gītā* says that he who is having the witness attitude is never born again, it is insisting on the cultivation of this attitude of non-identification, attitude of *looking* at changes without falling into them. When we look at a problem and concentrate on it, all our energy becomes mobilised in us and we direct that energy towards the solution of the problem. Certain moments we find the problem is too complicated to be solved and at other moments, we feel it easy to solve it. But a moment comes when the problem and our power to solve it, become equal. That exactly is the moment when we have mentally solved the problem. The problem exists ; but we have realized that the power to solve it also exists in us. This conviction should help us to develop the attention in us. For it is attention to the problem that awakens in us the power to solve it. It is the development of attention, an attention that never winks. For to wink is to fall into succession,

cause and effect. In real attention there are no successive moments, for it never stops, and if it does not stop then it cannot begin. That is what we meant when we said real attention never winks. This attention is pure consciousness. For consciousness there are no changes and stops. For the one who knows all changes and stops, never changes nor stops. Consciousness of change is not a change in consciousness, consciousness of a suppression is not suppression in consciousness.

There are two natures in us : one, the superior which is held by the 'attention sans succession' and the other, the inferior, which is open to a successive consciousness, to *serie temporelle*, to cause-effect. The *Gitā* calls the lower nature, the domain of the Guṇas, primordial components that make up our personality. The Guṇas are three in number, Sattva, balance or equilibrium, Rajas, activity and Tamas, inertia, indolence. Nothing is exempt from the sway of the Guṇas : from the objects of food to the gods, everything falls under the classification of this Guṇa or that or more of this Guṇa or less of that. We react with equilibrium to a food of that category, or an atmosphere of that category. One has more of the first Guṇa in him if he is inclined to meditate and not talk in a church or temple. One has more of the second, if he is prone to ostentation and praise, for example, and one has more of the third, if he seeks low company or items of food that induce inertia or somnolence. Only the liberated men are free from the sway of Guṇas, for they have sublimated their lower nature of '*serie temporelle*' by '*attention sans coupure*'. The *Gitā* has constructed a whole doctrine of Guṇas with classifications of food, friends, worship, etc. . . . Guṇas are not simple tendencies in us open to external stimuli, but reals, real components that make up our personality, which though real can be transcended or transformed by attention of the witness attitude.

It is so difficult to rise above our nature, that is an eternal play of Guṇas, the realm of causes and consequence, the realm of Prakṛti.

We live in and by the cause and effect consciousness, even unconsciously. I say : 'I am the son of so and so, or the cousin of so and so'. Even in the spiritual world this malady infects us. We say : 'I am the disciple of so and so'. The world of causes is so much upon us. But it is not a creative world, creative in the sense of independent creation. The will that is behind this world presents a creative world, for the will is independent and looks on the world of causes. The pure will does not take decisions, for it has no desires.

The world of causes and consequences is a second-rate world and has no originality of its own. It only reflects the opinions of the world above, the world of will. Can a cause add to the totality of things, to the sum total of energy ? A cause *plays* with the sum-total of energy given to it and presents it in another form and calls it the effect. Take, for instance, a sculptor making a statue out of a stone. He by his artistic skill brings about a change in the collocation of atoms, or change in the form of the stone. Please don't think that we are giving a too materialistic interpretation of art. Not at all. We are not discounting the precious and invaluable artistic will of the artist which is behind this change of organization of matter. But even this will falls in the domain of effects and is inseparable from the effect. This will becomes energy that can be evaluated. Things evaluated are things belonging to the realm of Guṇas. They do not add to the totality, but they only change the organization. That which adds to the totality is the will that never falls into an effect, for instance, an artist's will, that never seeks form and interpretation. He sees beauty in the existing things (existence) and feels there is nothing to add. This is an overplus of feeling, that stands apart from totality. It is the witness attitude that stands apart from totality. It is the most creative attitude for it never chooses a special channel to evaluate its creativity.

Disappointments, chagrins and pleasures are a collocation of factors that arranged themselves in another way this year, this moment. One with witness attitude looks at events with

this spirit and is not grieved at disappointments nor elated at happy events.

To see all cause-effect relation as the re-organization of the same thing and not as any addition to the sum-total of things and to see the will involved in creation as the propulsion of an inferior nature that is pushed on by the Guṇas — this is the way God as witness sees. God as witness is the pure will that has no desire to create ; for after all nothing is really created. It is a change, sometimes appearing to be real, sometimes not. This God as witness is our innermost core. We live by it. During moments when we stand back from a situation to study it and to take a decision we appear to be indifferent and completely detached. But really we are not. We are then witness. We do not know the flow of time, we are unconscious of the external world, but yet supremely creative. The liberated man is like that. It does not mean that he never takes a decision and that he always looks on. Taking decision and acting are perceptible in a world of causes and consequence. But the liberated man is not in this world of causes, he is in the world non-manifest. How often when things happen we feel that they had long ago been decided in the non-manifest world and we couldn't see it earlier. The liberated man has better command of the seen world, for he arrives earlier than us in the world non-manifest, where events and things happen earlier to happening in the seen world.

#### QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

*Q.* It looks as though the way of the Witness is comfortable ?

*R.* Is vigilance comfortable ? To practise the witness attitude is to be vigilant. It means the mobilising of all our energy to solve a

problem without jumping into the midst of the problem and identifying with it and becoming emotional. When we identify with a problem, we lose much of our power. On the other hand, when we look at a problem, we draw or suck its life and energy from it.

There are real problems and unreal problems. A real problem is one that strikes us back by the reality we give it. If the father does not love the son intensely, the son's misbehaviour is not a problem to the father.

When we are before a problem and we want to solve it, a moment comes when we feel that the problem and our power to solve it are equal. That moment is very propitious, for that gives us the conviction that there lies hidden in us a reserve, a potentiality which has been awakened by the problem. When I feel I am equal to the problem, the problem becomes part of me and I absorb it. It is no more my enemy.

*Q.* Then it is a perpetual struggle ?

*R.* Yes, life is a struggle, if we take life is for an ideal. To choose something high in life is to fight for it. But we are not conscious of the elements of fight, we are only conscious of our adherence or devotion to the ideal. The mother is not conscious of the inconveniences given by the children but only conscious of the love for them, as her life is that love. What distinguishes man from animals is this struggle for an ideal. What distinguishes man from the animals is the memory of a fight for an ideal and this memory is the substance of our lives. I would also point out that nothing great is achieved without struggle. Ask the painters and artists what a struggle they have inside themselves before they produce something of worth.

Live near to God, and so all things will appear to you little in comparison with eternal realities.

—R. M. McCHEYNE

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Nature is too thin a screen ; the glory of the omnipresent God bursts through everywhere.

—EMERSON

## THE ANTHEM OF THE AWAKENED

R. RAMAKRISHNAN

AMONG the vast ranges of humanity with their varying zones of height and bulk and excellence, the loftiest reach, the highest peak, the very Mount Everest so to say, is the Sannyasin or the all-renouncing monk. To the common man the Sannyasin may mean nothing more than an interesting curiosity of a lone individual, one who has unwisely chosen to miss the joys of life. To the busy *samsārin*, the worldling, who is endlessly busy with the insatiable demands of a commonplace existence and is feeling secure in his rat hole, the Sannyasin may appear to be a cowardly entity who has run away from the battle of life. But the Sannyasin thrives on, despite all pity and ridicule from the purblind. He is neither a misanthrope nor an escapist. He, it is who is really the salt of the earth. He it is who really makes the most of life, and it is the others who miss the most of life. While others satisfy themselves with picking a few grains of glittering sand from life's ocean-beach, the Sannyasin heaps up grains of pure gold. He alone has a correct perspective, a wholesome view, a purposive plan. He reaps a bumper harvest from the agriculture of living. He alone sees life steadily and sees it whole. He alone plays his part in the drama well and enjoys the play most, for he knows it is all a play. He is free from illusions and delusions, does not lend himself to prejudices and false hopes, takes things as they come, reacts most intelligently and efficiently to every situation, is devoid of littlenesses and bitternesses, and is in consequence always contented and ever alive on a plane of existence where he cannot be parochial or parsimonious. The Sannyasin in short is the flower of humanity and in him is seen the fullest unfoldment of human possibilities. He is the Homa bird of humanity, himself flying high up and helping others to look up skyward instead of always grovelling on the earth.

India has therefore done well in having elevated the Sannyasin to the level of the adorable one. The pious longing of every Indian is to become eligible through worth for Sannyās in this birth or in the next, and even though wedded to family and earthly duty the Indian householder, the *grhastha*, never takes his eyes away from the golden heights of Sannyās which he hopes to reach some day. So in every religious rite he performs, in the preamble in which he states his purpose (the *sankalpa*) the householder no doubt refers to *iṣṭa-kamyārtha siddhi* (the attainment of what is desired of worldly favours), but at the same time he is careful to mention *Jñāna-vairāgya siddhi* also (the attainment of wisdom and renunciation). The popular belief is that when a person in the family takes to Sannyās seven generations anterior and seven posterior are purified and sanctified.

Indian social organization casts on the householder the duty of serving and looking after the material needs of the *sādhu*. The *sādhu* is not to be regarded as an idler, an economic no good, a dead weight, a non-productive limb. On the other hand, he is entitled to veneration as one who tends the cultural fire, as the holder aloft of the national flag. If society is a tree, the *sādhu* is its ripest fruit, and as the ripest fruit falls away, the *sādhu* too is no longer within the pale of society, but like the fruit ejected by the tree he is the true sign of the tree's ripeness.

The Sannyasin has been the aorta of the Indian nation. And so long as that aorta is unhurt the nation will be sound. One of the most telling of Swami Vivekananda's utterances is found in his lecture on 'My Master' in which with a prophet's insight and a patriot's pride he asserts: *The Indian nation cannot be killed*. And he adds by way of explanation, 'Deathless it stands, and it will stand so long

as that spirit shall remain as the background, so long as her people do not give up their spirituality. . . . So long as holiness is supremely venerated India cannot die.'

The part played by Sannyasins in the history of India has been a significant one. The sources of Indian Sannyās lie perhaps in the penance of Mahadeva himself : Tyagaraja, the prince of renouncers, is Yatiraja too, the prince of ascetics. Vivekananda goes so far as to style India the land of Bhagavān Śuka's birth, and Śuka was an ideal Sannyasin. Buddha is another glorious luminary in the line of India's Sannyasins. The next brilliant example is that of Śaṅkara. The contribution of Buddha and of Śaṅkara to Indian nation-building is everlasting and all-inclusive. Coming to modern times India has thrown up a Ramakrishna and a Vivekananda.

Swami Vivekananda is the very spirit of India in quite a number of ways. But the biggest of those ways is in his having been a Sannyasin out and out. It is recorded in his biography that even when he was a boy, two visions came before him — one of worldly prosperity and social influence, material affluence and abundant luxury, the other of self-chosen poverty, renunciation, sacrifice and service, and that it was the latter that appealed to him. It was the ascetic God, Śiva that claimed his boyish adoration. And *sādhus* and itinerant monks had a fascination for him even in his early years. His Master, Sri Ramakrishna, definitely cast him for the career of a monk, going so far as to pray for the thorough upsetting of the plans for matrimony which Narendra Nath's parents were making for him. And the ages-old mantle of Sannyāsa came to Vivekananda as a piece of national legacy, as an Indian citizenship right, from Ramakrishna and Totapuri and the long line of Totapuri's predecessors up to Śaṅkara, Govindapada, Gaudapada and many other luminaries. Vivekananda was in every way an ornament to the order of Sannyasins. His discrimination was profound, his renunciation thorough, his knowledge vast and his wisdom perfect. His was not that dangerous thing of

a little learning ; he had tasted and drunk deep of the Pierian spring of the Paramahamsa. His pilgrimage through India was a parallel to Śaṅkara's *digvijaya* through Bharat. And in fulfilment of the needs of the times he did what Śaṅkara had not to do : he went beyond the Indian shores with his beautiful gift to the spirit of man, and gave to the West a taste of the nectar of Indian wisdom. As the Swami has several claims to grateful remembrance by posterity (one may easily get lost in admiration of him for his literary output, another for his patriotic fire, a third for his universalism of spirit, yet another for his love of the common man), we must take particular care to be ever conscious of the monk in him, for he was first a monk and then other things. Sister Nivedita emphasizes this fact in these words : 'To the conscience of the Swami his monastic vows were incomparably precious. He was accompanied by the constant eagerness for monastic perfection'.

Vivekananda's exaltation of the monastic ideal, the thoroughness and loftiness of his conception of the monk's role, the fire that came into his utterance whenever he dealt with the subject of monastic living have all come down to us as a poem entitled 'The Song of the Sannyasin' which at many places reminds us of some of the shorter Vedantic poems of Śaṅkara. 'The Song of the Sannyasin' is the glow of a flame of unusual heat and brilliance from the incandescence which Vivekananda was. The circumstances in which the 'Song' came to be composed are highly interesting.

The seven weeks from June 19 to August 6 of 1895 found Swami Vivekananda in Thousand Island Park, an island in the St. Lawrence River. These seven weeks have been described as spiritually the most fruitful days of his American mission. There he lived, in the then almost uninhabited island, in a cottage, with only twelve students (never more than ten at a time), feasting them on Inspired Talks. Here he was not the orator or the patriot or any other of the numerous things he was ; he was just a Maharshi pouring out Brahma Jnana. The physical setting was Ame-

rican, but the atmosphere was that of an Aryan hermitage of old, and nothing less than an *Upaniṣad* was being chanted out, for Swamiji was there in one of his most exalted and luminous moods. It is said that so high was the state of his mind that while meditating on the bank of the river he entered into *Nirvikalpa Samadhi*. In a letter to a distinguished Indian he said in the glory of his realizations at the Thousand Island Park, 'I am free, my bonds are cut, what care I whether this body goes or does not go . . . ? I have a truth to teach, I, the child of God. And He that gave me the truth will send me fellow-workers from the Earth's bravest and best.' Now and then the Monk would come out in protest against his surroundings and distractions. His poem, 'The Song of the Sannyasin', considered by some to be his masterpiece, was written, as his biographers point out, in a state of spiritual fervour and in protest to one who interfered with his life, trying to dictate terms to him. He had received a letter criticising his determination to work among the people instead of among the rich; and as an answer he sent back by return mail 'The Song of the Sannyasin'. Posterity is quite grateful to the friend who pricked the Swami to this hymnal outburst!

'The Song of the Sannyasin' is a piece of *Veda*, for its author was a Rishi and *Mantradrṣṭā*. The only qualifying factors are that it is not in Sanskrit, but in English, and was not composed on Indian soil, but on American earth. But its content is all *Veda* and *Vedanta*, it is a piece of *Mokṣa Śāstra*; it is *Brahma Vidyā*. And the state portrayed in it is the loftiest and the most uncompromising and the most undiluted Idealism-Realism. And like all great poetry the poem is impassioned.

The poem consists of thirteen stanzas each ending with the refrain: Sannyasin bold! Say 'Om Tat Sat Om!' To the Swami the first mark of a Sannyasin is boldness — boldness not merely in the sense of ordinary courage, but boldness to keep out illusions and delusions and dwarfing pettiness; boldness to face the Truth and be one with it. For *Abhi* or

fearlessness has to be the great quality of the monk at all stages and in all places. And 'Om Tat Sat Om' is the utterance that is suggestive of that region which is the border-land between the manifested universe and the unmanifested Infinite, between vibration and Silence, between the Transcendent and the immanent. Om is the sound which issues when the diver into the depths of the Absolute steps out of the silent waters on to the billows-filled surface of the Relative. Om is the quintessence of all articulation. It is *Nāda Brahman*, the Sound Absolute. The Sannyasin's life is full of the aroma of Om.

In the opening stanza of the Song, the Swami aptly describes the song's nativity. He exhorts the Sannyasin to wake up the note of this song, for it will keep him ever in tune with the spirit of monkhood. The Song, the Swami reminds us, was born far off, away from the taint of worldliness, in caves and glades untouched by *Kāma-Kāñcana* and fertilized by *Jñāna*, *Satya* and *Ānanda*. He calls on the monk to sing this note high. It is entitled to be sung at top pitch, for it is the song of liberation, of beatitude.

The Swami then calls upon the Sannyasin to strike off his fetters. The fetters sometimes look bright but are no less fetters. Gold bonds bind down as much as iron ones. Any *bandha* is a dead-weight. The *dwandwas* or dualities (love and hate, good and bad) must be altogether got rid of. Love may be better than hate, but is no less an instrument of bondage. A caressed slave is no less a slave than a whipped one, slavery of any kind is detestable. He therefore calls upon the monk to throw away all these pairs. And it is quite in his hands to strike off and throw off all fetters. What is needed is a grim determination.

These fetters are on us merely because we choose to give asylum to darkness. Darkness is a very will-o'-the-wisp leading us on to deeper and deeper gloom. This *moha andhakāra* which we hug has to be let go. (The darkness of infatuation has to be cast aside.) The great trouble with us is *trṣṇā*, desire, thirst for life, — which is responsible for the soul's

being dragged from birth to death and then from death to birth. Self-conquest is the highest exertion and is indeed all-conquest. No power can undo us unless we give in and yield to one weakness or another. The Swami therefore calls upon the monk to be firm and never slide or slip or yield.

The Swami then reminds the monk that while life is a cause and effect sequence, and embodiment is itself bondage, the Soul of man is an entity beyond the pale of *nāma-rūpa*, an entity which is *nitya mukta*, and all that the monk has to do is to be ever aware that he is the Soul.

The duties and obligations of earthly relationships are no doubt sacred, but do not relate to the highest function and destiny of man. The perceptions of manifold existence are not ultimate truth. Soul is beyond sex. The only Thing that is, is the Self and the monk has always to take his stand on his being the Self.

The universe is all Māyā, illusion. The Reality on which Māyā plays her play is merely the Sākṣin — the witness. In fact it is the Reality which appears to be Māyā or Prakṛti, and the Sannyasin has to discard the appearance and identify himself with the Substance, for there is only One in truth.

Freedom is the thing to be striven for and attained, but neither the *Iha* nor the *Para* can bestow freedom on man. Even scriptures and temples are of no avail in the procuring of *mukti*. Not any exterior agency but one's own hand is the mischief-maker, and bondage is self-caused. If this is so, so much is it a matter for relief, for all that one has to do is to extricate one's hand from the hold, and the result is freedom. The Sannyasin is therefore advised to sever all ties.

The Sannyasin seeks *Santi* (Peace) not only for himself, but for all. He assures *abhaya* to all. To him the Self is all in all, and is both the highest and the lowest manifestations. He is the renoucer, not of this or that, but of all; he has no hopes and no fears; he does not shun hell and seek heaven, he just renounces both. He relentlessly cuts his bonds.

The maintenance of the physical body is the main concern of ordinary folk; but the Sannyasin does not bestow a thought on it. He has finished off with the body. Its own past momentum carries it on, the Sannyasin does not interfere. The body may be honoured and feted, he is not enthused, it may be kicked and dishonoured, he does not care. For where all is one where is praise or blame or reaction? The natural state of the Sannyasin is an unchanging calmness.

*Kāma* and *lobha* and *yaśas* (lust and greed and fame) are antipodes to Truth. The married state even in its noblest reaches is short of perfection. Possession even of the bare minimum, anger even of the light sort, retards liberation. The Sannyasin has to give up all these impediments with an iron will.

The Sannyasin is never a Gṛhastha; he has no home. He is really too big to be confined in any home. To him the vast sky is the roof; the green grass is the bed. He does not seek food; he accepts whatever food chance brings his way. He does not stop to consider whether the food is good or bad. He does not discriminate and select his food and drink, he is above all the ordained rules in regard to food. *Anna*, he knows, cannot stain the Ātman. He is beyond the restricting banks and staying dams, and flows along free and unimpeded like a rolling river.

Truth is the privilege of the few; the many dare not be its votaries. The Sannyasin who is a Mahatman is one of the few. The unknowing many make fun of him and despise him. Darkness laughs at sunlight! The Sannyasin is unaffected by the jeers of the multitude. What is more, he offers to help the very jeerers. Wandering from place to place he who is himself free, frees others from the darkness of ignorance and the covering of infatuation. He feels not the lure of pleasure, nor the terror of pain. His stand is above pain and pleasure.

The Sannyasin lives on just to exhaust the force of his past *karma*. He accumulates no new *karma*. When his old hoard is spent out, his soul is released for ever. He has not to

be reborn. There is no more of I and you for him, no more of the human and the divine. His I is the All-Reality. He is one with the Sarvam and the Ānandam. The Sannyasin whose essential characteristic is boldness (boldness of ideation and realization) is exhorted by Vivekananda to know *Tat Twam Asi*—That Thou Art, and give utterance to the realized knowledge implied in that *Mahāvākyā*, by chanting the *Mahāmantra*, Om Tat Sat Om!

It is stated in the biography of Ramakrishna that some time before his passing away Vivekananda met him and submitted to him, 'Everyone has been blessed with realization. Let me, too, have something. When all have got it, shall I alone be without it?' And Ramakrishna told him, 'Just make some arrangement for your family, and you shall get all. What do you want?' Vivekananda answered, 'I wish to remain immersed in Samadhi for

three or four days at a stretch, breaking it only for food.' And Ramakrishna said, 'You are a fool. There is a higher state than that even. Don't you sing—“whatever is, is Thyself?” Come here after making some provision for your family, and you shall get a higher state than even *Somadhi*.'

It is well to remember that the author of 'The Song of the Sannyasin' is one who was established in a higher state than even Samadhi. And as the 'Song' came out of the fullness of his being, its sweep and wealth of ideas are naturally of the sublimest kind. And though the state described in the "Song" is one that is far beyond the reach of many of us mortals, still it is the *Swatantra Gitam* (The Song of Liberation) of All Mankind, for all men are ever-marching pilgrims to the Horizon of Godhead which may be far away now, but is within the certain reach of all some time or other.

## THE MYSTICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF ASURAS IN KRISHNA LEELA

RADHEY SHYAM RASTOGI

THE purpose of an Avatara, according to the *Gitā*, is the salvation of the good and the destruction of the wicked. But if the destruction of the wicked merely took place five thousand years ago, it will be small consolation to those who seek salvation now, or are oppressed by the wicked at present.

Who are the wicked ones that are destroyed by the Lord? It is not external enemies, but the enemies within us who oppress us. It is our own evil desires and tendencies which oppress and cause us to suffer, and it is these which must be destroyed. We only live under the delusion that all our sufferings are due to the wickedness of our oppressors outside and that if they were to be destroyed we should be perfectly all right. As we find in the *Gitā* the self is verily the friend of the self, and the self alone is also the enemy of the self (*ātmaiva hyātmano bandhurātmaiva ripurāt-*

*manah*). Six enemies, namely, desire, anger, greed, delusion, envy and pride are well entrenched in our hearts; they are our oppressors, it is they who cause us to suffer and their destruction is absolutely necessary for our spiritual progress.

As some writer has very rightly observed, 'The Lilas of Sri Krishna are said to be *nitya*. It is not that Sri Krishna is for ever beheading an eternally terrified Kamsa in an eternal Mathura, but that the spiritual laws symbolized, for our benefit, by these acts are always operating in our hearts, as also in the world now, just as much as five thousand years ago.' People are oppressed by evil rulers even now as in the past but these rulers are not any earthly kings. They are *Kāma*, *Krodha*, *Lobha* and *Moha*, who are the true rulers of the world; our earthly rulers are mere puppets in their hands. So, birth of Sri

Krishna must take place in the darkness of our hearts, or else there can be no salvation for us.

### WHO ARE VASUDEVA AND DEVAKI ?

In Srimad Bhāgawata we find, 'It is pure Sattva that is called Vasudeva, for it is in that pure Sattva, freed from Rajas and Tamas that Lord makes His appearance.'<sup>1</sup> Śridhar Swami takes pure *sattva* to mean as *Antahkarana*.

Devaki means Daivi prakṛti, which is the refuge of Mahatmas (*daivīm prakṛtimāśritāḥ*), the living light of pure consciousness in which He himself becomes manifest when the *antahkarana* is pure and sattvic. When that Divine Birth takes place in our hearts, the fetters of our bondage will fall off from us, the bolts of our prison house will open and the wonders of the Lila will commence. He, the Birthless — for He is in our hearts already — will be born anew, for though He is there yet we see Him not. Then shall we see the action of the Actionless, for though He acts not, yet by His presence will our enemies die. Then shall we understand His words :

'For the salvation of the good, for the destruction of the wicked, for the establishment of Dharma I am born from age to age.'<sup>2</sup>

The city of Mathura is in every man, the kingdom of his own mind, where the ego is to be put down. Mathura is from *matha* (मथ) to destroy. Materiality is put down there by Divine wisdom. Kamsa is *kālānemi*, or the mark left by the wheel of time. Each one of us has inherited through countless ages a strong element of materiality, which tries to reign over us. This is the Kamsa. When this materialism ultimately is put down by Krishna,

the spiritual evolution of humanity becomes assured.

The little Ego (Kamsa) naturally fears lest the Divine inner self destroy it and, being violent by its very nature, tries to prevent this occurrence by suppressing every spiritual urge. But God's will cannot be frustrated. Nor can the personal ego avoid its own dissolution at the proper time. The birth of Krishna in the utter darkness of midnight is symbolical of spirituality beginning to manifest in the heart of devotion at the darkest hour, in the deepest sorrow, and with it brings the seed of utmost joy and illumination. Heaven itself salutes the holy birth of the Divine Child with musical sounds and rains of blessings. At that birth great joy and awe fill the hearts of the human parents — the unspeakable reverent bliss that floods the soul when it first knows God as really Omnipresent. To help devotees on this path, God veils Himself again as a normal human child so that He may win our love through His touching simplicity, and human ways and needs, and not force it from us by His overwhelming power and glory. To guard the Baby from now about to manifest the fullness of Divine Grace, the father carries Him over the swollen river of worldly desires to the house of his relative Nanda.

Nanda's abode is Gokul which is another name for Goloka, the place of the highest spiritual life. Nanda is Bliss ; he is spiritual bliss and the bliss of an *Antarmukha*. Gokula is the field for spiritual growth, the nursery ground of enthusiastic devotion, and what is more, of devotional love. It is the Bliss aspect of Iśvara which attracts to Him the Jīva and makes devotion a law, a necessity. Man is guided by Bliss in his relation to the Universe. He is guided by bliss in his relation to himself.

But the enemy of the Spirit continues its desperate vile assaults even there, only to be vanquished and annihilated. The *āsuric* forces appear in succession in their most virulent forms. But an army of Asuras was not a match for the tender child, now playing in the

<sup>1</sup> सत्त्वं विशुद्धं वसुदेव शब्दितं  
यदीयते तत्र पुमानपावृतः ।

— *Bhagavata*, 4. 3. 23.

<sup>2</sup> परिवाणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम् ।  
धर्मसंस्थापनार्थीय संभवामि युगे युगे ।

lap of Yaśoda. He steals the hearts of Gopas and Gopis by his sweet frolics on the one hand and by making short work of and sending to heaven the evil demons on the other.

### WHO ARE ASURAS ?

What does this Lila of killing the Asuras mean ? Who are the Asuras ? There are two opposite forces in man — one divine, the other not divine ; one that of the higher nature, the other of the lower nature. These have been clearly described in the sixteenth chapter of the *Gītā*. Purity, courage, self-awareness, charitableness, self-control, knowledge of sacred lore, practice of tranquillity, non-injury, truthfulness, patience, self-abnegation, compassion, piety, modesty, sobriety, etc. — all these good qualities are of the divine nature and lead man to divinity. To hinder this upward journey there are the waylayers — the ego, false teaching (Avidyā), sectarian bigotry, pedantry, philosophic speculation, hypocrisy, lust, envy, greed, laziness and complacency, and a host of such dark forces, which are the *asuras* and demons. These oppose the almighty Divine Force and are in turn shattered to pieces by a single stroke of the universal energy, the Divine Sakti. A world of darkness will be nowhere before a ray of the Divine Effulgence. What is years of war to the *asura*, is a moment's play to the Divine. Sri Krishna is the Divine Force incarnate to raise humanity to Divinity. He removed the demoniac forces that defied His will.

Let us examine what these asuras in his Lila specifically stand for.

*Pūtana* : This demon spirit sent by Egoism (Kamsa) is charming to see but poison to those who seek nourishment for their inner life. She stands for the false doctrine, which easily lures away the neophyte to ruin, because it is made so sweet to look at and is adorned by many attractions. The wholesome milk of truth is corrupted with the poison of falsehood, and these wrong notions sweep away the young and inexperienced on to an evil path. How can poison hurt Him who is

Himself the nectar of Truth ? With the milk of her doctrine He sucks up her very life, so intensely does He draw in whatever this false teacher has to give, but purges it of all the errors therein.

*Sakāṣṭura* stands for literalism in Scriptures and mechanical pedantry. The cart loaded with milk and its products symbolizes all forms of truth described in words, in books, in Holy Scripture. To teach devotees not to rely on any verbalisation of the living Truth — which is love and can never be truly defined in language — Krishna breaks the demon cart and upsets the contents of all its vessels. The bibliolater relying on the written word can know little of the Truth, so his faith in books must be broken.

*Trnāvarta* : He is the whirlwind demon of philosophic speculation and controversy. The neophyte is swept away from the solid ground of experience by the lure of his mind's cleverness and is carried far above the limits of actuality and lost to sight among whirling clouds of imagination. Krishna, the Inner Soul of all, is the Reality against the extravagance of thought, and the weight of Reality is like a mountain to the demon of speculation. Krishna strangles this irresponsible fantasy-mongering, crashes it on the ground of real experience and solid fact, and all fantasies are scattered to the winds.

*Vatsāsura* : This demon (egoism disguised as a self-styled disciple) assumes the form of a calf among other calves (devotees who rely on His providence and protection) and thus seems to flatter the Seer as the 'Teacher of the World'. Krishna at once senses the danger of the idea of this fancied attainment, while the real path has only just been entered on. Krishna breaks the flattery on its own tree of bitter fruit.

*Bakāsura* is the demon crane of religious hypocrisy, persisting in a show of devotion. The teacher who makes an outward pretence of devotion and piety to attract disciples is compared to the crane, who is a symbol of hypocrisy, because he stands for hours on one

leg watching for his prey, the fish, while appearing to be piously engaged in meditation. Krishna being swallowed by Bakasura was thus at the mercy of insincerity but the fire of real devotion frees Him from the tempter. Krishna pulls the two halves of the beak apart and tears it in two, which implies that by the force of discrimination the real is separated from the false.

*Aghasura* : Agha is sin. The sins of a man, his past evil deeds, stand up for a while and swallow up all that is divine in him. Those who know the struggles of a devotee know very well how hard it is when all that is evil in man, the accumulated tendencies of innumerable births, rise up in rebellion, as it were, at a certain stage of his progress. Who else but Sri Krishna can save a devotee at such a crisis ? The flesh itself has to be destroyed and the whole nature changed. The devotee undergoes a second birth, as it were. His *vrittis* are not the *vrittis* of yore ; even the energies that guide these *vrittis* undergo a change.

*Dhenukasura* is the demon ass of bigotry and sectarianism trying to make a monopoly of Truth as a possession of one's own sect. It is not Krishna who destroys the evil, but His strength Balaram implying that bigotry can be overcome only by somewhat forceful methods. Balaram seizes it by the feet, which uphold falseness and smashes it against the tree whereon these fruits are produced. As the tree is overthrown, it brings down many other trees broken by the bodies of the demon's kinsmen: dogmatism, confusion, falsehood, pride, jealousy, anger, cruelty, persecution etc. The ground is littered over with remnants of spiritual feasts, together with the wreckage of bigoted creeds.

The following points of comparison are noticeable : (1) Donkeys kick with their hind legs ; sectarians use back-handed, evasive and even dishonest arguments. (2) The sectarians are not actual planters of the grove, but they have appropriated the revelations made to others earlier. (3) After the sectarian creeds

are discredited, these truths are freed again for enjoyment and enlightenment of all.

*Pralambasura* : The demon in the disguise of a boy represents laziness and complacency accompanied by wild imaginings and extravagance of conceit. Balaram strikes the demon on the head, seat of the mind's vain imaginings and kills him at once ; the filth of that false notion oozes from the corpse.

*Sankhacuda* : The name literally means 'conch-crest', referring to the beautiful head of hair, the adornment of wealth which characterises him. This demon represents eagerness for fame, honour and enjoyment disguising itself as devotion. From him Krishna snatches the precious jewel of beauty, which draws the heart away from the path. Fame, honour and the like are taken away from one to whom the Lord will show His grace.

*Arista* is the demon of overconfidence in being safe from the two extremes of absorption in and contempt for the world. The demon was wounded with its own horns pulled out and crushed by the feet of the Lord, implying that overconfidence receives severe jolt from pride and self-sufficiency and is crushed by humility and service.

*Keши* (spiritual pride) is one of the most deadly envoys sent by Kamsa (Egoism). As long hair is the natural crown and pride of human beauty, this temptation takes the form of a stampeding wild horse, with a tremendous mane that sweeps the sky and shakes even the stars from their courses — so measureless is its arrogance. The horse is killed by the soft arm of Krishna thrust into its mouth. Evil cannot be cast out by evil, but by its opposite ; it is by playful spontaneous action that egoistic pride in activity is expelled.

*Vyomasura* is the demon of immense illusive power and a son of Maya. This demon is nothing else but 'the delusion of the Void'. It is the last manifestation of Egoism. The bliss of Reality, until firmly established in the soul, is not always to be found or enjoyed. During this interim period, there is a blank-

ness, a sort of void, 'the dark night of the soul'; the unreal has ceased to be, the Real is not yet; the world is vain, yet God still hides Himself. The aspirant hangs suspended between the sky and the earth. Ultimately the Lord frees the devotees from the gloom, and the bliss of Reality is firmly established.

The principle underlying all the *Lilas* of the Lord against the *Asuras* mentioned above is to be found in the allegory of the deadly serpent, *Kāliya*. The river of existence is infected by the *Kāliya* of *Āsuric* ego. Its deadly venom poisons the limpid waters of the stream of life, and of lives that breathe its atmosphere. People are afraid to go near the deadly serpent. Sri Krishna, the Conscious Force of Divinity, plays in the same water, sports with the serpent, confronts its rage,

belittles its enormous coils, gets upon its hooded pride and dances in the joy of victory. The serpent of vital ego vomits all its poisonous stuff, struggles for breath, knows its Lord and prays for His grace, surrendering wholly to His will. The Lord removes the serpent, purifies the water and blesses the pool. He adds, 'any devotee bathing in the stream of life in memory of Him, will, like *Kāliya* himself, be freed from every sin'.

Sri Krishna, recognized as the *Purna Avatara* or the perfect manifestation, who rules all beings residing in their hearts, manifested Himself to awaken in them His conscious presence as their Soul, as their innermost essence, divesting them entirely of egoism. This is the whole secret of His *Lilas* against *Asuras*.

## SRI SANKARA AND THE UPANISADS

P. NAGARAJA RAO

THE genius of India has expressed itself in her scriptures. Among her great scriptures the *Vedas* rank the foremost. They constitute the oldest document of the human race. All the great Orientalists affirm the antiquity of the *Vedas*. Max Mueller writes, 'as long as man continues to take an interest in the history of his race and as long as we collect in libraries and museums the relics of former ages, the first place in that long row of books which contains the records of the Aryan branch of mankind will belong for ever to the *Rg Veda*'. Bloomfield writes, 'the *Rg Veda* is not only the most ancient literary monument of India, but also, the most ancient literary document of the Indo-European peoples'. Dr. Nicol Macnicol holds that 'the Vedic literature is earlier than that of Greece or Israel, and reveals a high level of civilization among those who found in it the expression of their worship. The *Upaniṣads* are the concluding portions of the *Vedas* in more than one sense of the term. They are not

only at the end of the *Vedas* but also give us the conclusive and final message of the *Vedas*.

The Spanish writer Mascaro described the *Upaniṣads* as the '*Himalayas of the soul*'. 'Just as those great mountain ranges determine the climate, the rainfall and the physical features of the peninsula, so do these heights of wisdom determine the quality of the spiritual wisdom of the race that inhabits it.'

All the great system builders of the living philosophy of the Hindus, i.e., the various schools of *Vedanta*, have developed their distinctive views through their commentaries on the *Upaniṣads*. There is no important form of Hindu thought, and no saint or savant, poet or prophet that is not rooted in and influenced by the *Upaniṣads*. Their poetry and lofty idealism have moved the minds and swayed the hearts of countless generations of men all over the globe. They bring to our consciousness the vivid sense of the spiritual, through their speculative daring, moral earnestness and intuitive realization. 'In the domain of intuitive

philosophy their achievement is stupendous. Nothing that went before them for compass and power, for suggestiveness and satisfaction can stand comparison with them.' They bring before us the great spiritual vision and drive home the urgent need for man to experience that vision. They give us the path, in moving imagery. Their aim is not mere science nor dry abstract intellectual speculative philosophy, but right living. They bring to us the experience of a truth which spells peace and freedom to aching spirits and troubled hearts. They combine spiritual vision, and philosophical arguments that lead to spiritual experience. The Upaniṣadic seers report their discoveries arising from their illumined consciousness. They are not only gifted with a clear vision, but also have a sincere feeling and a wonderful capacity for lucid expression. They do not merely satisfy our instinct of wonder and curiosity. They ring in peace and harmony. They shed fearlessness and benediction on all who read it with reverence for spiritual light. Schopenhauer's eulogy of the Upaniṣads brings out the enormous influence it wielded on the German mind. He writes, 'This incomparable book stirs the spirit to the very depths of the soul; from every sentence deep, original and sublime thoughts arise, and the whole is pervaded by a high and holy earnest spirit. In the whole world there is no study, except that of the originals, so beneficial and so elevating as that of the Upaniṣads (*Oupnekhat*). It has been the solace of my life and it will be the solace of my death.'

The message of the Upaniṣads has influenced world's thought significantly. The German Renaissance represented by Schopenhauer, Hartmann, Nietzsche and Keyserling, the American represented by Emerson, Thoreau and Walt Whitman, the Irish represented in the personalities of W. B. Yeats, G. W. Russell and George Moore have all been influenced by the Upaniṣads.

John Eglington in his memoirs of the poet A. E. observes 'Goethe, Wordsworth, Emerson and Thoreau among moderns have something of this vitality and wisdom, but we can

find all they have said and much more in the grand Sacred Books of the East. The *Bhagavad Gītā* and the Upaniṣads contain such Godlike fullness of wisdom on all things that I feel the authors must have looked with calm remembrance back through a thousand passionate lives, full of feverish strife for and with shadows, ere they could have written with such certainty of things which the soul feels to be true.'

The Upaniṣads are all not alike. They differ in their length and methods of exposition. Some are only a few verses and others are very long. Some are in verse and some are in prose. Yet others combine both. In style and manner, they differ widely. Sometimes we have simple narrative, and sometimes abstract metaphysical speculation. We have long argumentative dialogues. The tone of the Upaniṣads also fluctuates. In some we have a mood of intimate dialogues and high seriousness and in others homely informal discussion and insightful parables and long analogies. The sages approached the problems of life with sensitive souls, earnest minds, keen intellects and a reverent heart. In the words of Sri Aurobindo: 'The rishis (sages) disclose what they have seen, they do not argue. It is not a free broadcasting of truths. The dialogues are always between a qualified aspirant and an illumined teacher. They imparted the truths to aspirants only after testing the sincerity and the strength of the student's mind.'

The Upaniṣadic seers twenty-five centuries ago sought the truth with pure minds, not by the methods of pure reason or logic. They did not employ the dialectical method. They reported their intuitive experience.

The message of the Upaniṣads are eternal in the sense they are true for all times, all men and in all ages. Historical scholarship strives hard to fix the date of the Upaniṣads as 600 B.C. Indian tradition declares the view that their message and gospel belong not to any one period of time, but to the spirit of man, in his pilgrimage from the 'unreal to the Real, from darkness to light, and from death to immortality'. Their message is neither old,

nor new, for it is eternal in its relevance and significance. The truths they have revealed are not far removed from us. They are still actual and their words live again for us. They are not the mere historical documents bound up with the past. They are not mere guardians of the past, but are the heralds of the future. They have a message that is terrifically topical to our war-weary and nerve-racked nuclear age. We are not very much superior to our ancients in spiritual depth or moral strength, though we have taken long strides in scientific inquiry and technological development.

There are as many as two hundred Upaniṣads. Ten of them are accepted as authoritative. They are : *Īśa, Kena, Kaṭha, Praśna, Muṇḍaka, Māṇḍūkya, Taittirīya, Aitareya, Chāndogya, Br̥hadāraṇyaka*.

We shall now examine the philosophy and the religion of the Upaniṣads. The different schools of Vedānta have each striven hard to systematize the teaching of the Upaniṣads. Each school claims that its doctrines accord perfectly with the gospel of the Upaniṣads. Broadly speaking, we discern two distinct lines and voices in the passages of the Upaniṣads, i.e., *Absolute monism* represented by Śaṅkara and personal theism represented by Rāmānuja. Each with all his erudition strives hard to make the Upaniṣads consistent with his doctrine and creed. The earliest commentator is Śaṅkara and those after him hold that their interpretation is alone correct. Each orthodox commentary exults in the joy of finding its own doctrines in the sayings of the Upaniṣads. Where the passages in the Upaniṣads run counter to the doctrines of the systems, the system builders strain the language of the Upaniṣads and force them to yield the meaning expounded by the doctrines of their system. Thus there has been the tendency to make the Upaniṣads, a closed book of dogmatic spiritual assertion. This has been possible because the Upaniṣads do not speak in cold logical language.

Besides these two views, modern interpreters hold that the Upaniṣads essentially represent 'the deposit of spiritual experience'. It is the

primary data, i.e. the intuitive evidence. The different interpretations are intellectual interpretations and neat logical formulations of the primary evidence. Each commentary is a particular formulation of the experience conditioned by the minds of men reflecting their times. They do not exhaust the complete truth. 'The life of the spirit is wider than any particular religious formulation.' When disputes arise between the commentaries, it is open to us to review the evidence afresh. Such in short is the approach of the moderns to the Upaniṣads. Some have found the levels of universal religion in the Upaniṣads. Dr. Radhakrishnan has tried to reconcile the two trends. He writes, 'the absolutistic and the theistic views of the Upaniṣads are not exclusive of each other. Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja emphasize different aspects of the teaching of the Upaniṣads'.

According to Śaṅkara, the Upaniṣadic seers reveal in the depth of their intuition the existence of one spirit without a second. It is called Brahman. Brahman is the ultimate Reality. Brahman is the ground and the goal of existence. Its nature is incomprehensible and unknowable. There is nothing besides it that is real, so it cannot be described. To describe it is to limit its infinitude. It is homogeneous spirit. It does not admit of any relation, external or internal. It is different from all, and there is nothing like it. It is consciousness, bliss, knowledge and infinitude. Brahman is not gross substance, it is conscious spirit. It is perfection, Reality and Bliss. It is not the product of any factor, it is self-caused and eternal. It is an absolute contrast to and is fundamentally different from things that are. It can only be expressed in terms of what it is not. This does not mean that it is *non-existent* as some misunderstand; for there is nothing real besides Brahman. Brahman is 'unconditioned existence' and 'unexcelable bliss' and perfect knowledge.

The quest of the Upaniṣadic seers is for the ultimate reality that explains the world of things and beings. According to these sages, the world is not self-caused, self-maintaining,

self-dependent. Its order, regularity and design go against its autonomy. The sages employ the objective as well as the subjective methods to arrive at the existence of non-dual reality, Brahman. They analyze the facts of objective Nature and the facts of the inner life of man. They pass in review, the different first principles recounted as the possible ultimate Reality e.g., Time, Nature, accidentalism and find all of them unacceptable on the logical ground that they do not satisfactorily explain the world of things and the world of persons. The existence of spirit is in the first instance posited on the authority of scripture as an hypothesis. Secondly, it is explained in terms of reasoning and logic to satisfy the discursive temperament of men. Lastly, the reality of the spirit is confirmed by the self-certifying spiritual experience of it.

The three-fold authority for the existence of the spirit, e.g., scripture, logic and experience, cannot be labelled as dogmatic or authoritarian. It is unfair to describe the method as unscientific.

The affirmation of the spirit through spiritual experience is the manifest destiny of man, described by the term *mokṣa*. *Mokṣa* is the fourth and the most cherished fundamental aspiration of man that enables him to realize his true nature. *Mokṣa* is nothing else than the experience of the overmastering of the sense of evil and achieving unalloyed bliss which is eternal and infinite. This is the inalienable birth-right of every human being. Spiritual realization as an experience is *sui generis*. It should not be confused with trance, reverie, hypnotic states, dreams and hallucinations. The state of experience is called *turiya*. Once the individual has the spiritual experience, he experiences a rebornness and is no longer a play-thing of others. He is established in himself and is a transformed being. Brahman is the reality of the objective universe and the subjects in the world. It is at once the immanent Principle and also the transcendent Self. He is the energy behind all and yet is not identical with it. This is not pantheism. The arithmetic of pantheism de-

clares God minus the world is zero. The arithmetic of the Upaniṣads declares in a beautiful image the fact that Brahman is not affected by its effects in any way, 'that is full and this is full, from that full rises this full. Taking away this full from that, what remains is yet full'. Brahman is the ground of reality.

The entire world of physical nature is vivified and made to function by the power of Brahman. The absolute of the Upaniṣads according to Śaṅkara is a unique idea without a before or an after. It is not a system of parts, nor an organism with limbs, nor is it either a personality with infinite qualities. It is not a blank negation for it is perfect existence. It is non-composite consciousness. When we heap all the high qualities known to human imagination, we only limit the unlimited infinite. Our descriptions are feeble representations of the Reality for it overflows all descriptions. All human descriptions are mere analogues of human qualities, projections of our ideas. For all our genius the highest qualities that we attribute are pitifully human conceptions. Hence, the Upaniṣads describe the Absolute in negative terms, as 'not this', 'not this', and at times in contradictory adjectives and also in paradoxical language. 'He who does not comprehend it — to him it is known. He who comprehends it — he does not really know. It is not really understood by those who understand it. It is really understood by those who do not understand it.'

Brahman, the ultimate Reality is described in two ways. It is undifferentiated, non-composite consciousness. That is one poise. It is the static poise. The same Brahman appears as the soul of man and as the God of religion also. Though there are no two ultimate categories accepted by Śaṅkara yet the Upaniṣads describe that Brahman appears in 'two aspects (*dve vā Brahmano rūpe*)', the two forms, the gross and the subtle, the mortal and the immortal, the limited and the unlimited, the existence and the being'. The static poise and the dynamic poise are the two aspects. The Absolute of philosophy and the God of religion are not two different things. In a signi-

ficant passage in his commentary on the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* (III. 8. 12) Śaṅkara clinches the issue and writes, 'Therefore, the unconditioned Spirit, being beyond speech and mind, undifferentiated and one, is described as "not this, not this". When it has limiting adjuncts as body and organs, which are characterized by ignorance, desire and work, it is called the transmigrating individual self; and when the self has the limiting adjunct of power of Māyā, eternal and unlimited knowledge, it is called the inner ruler and Iśvara (Personal God).' The two concepts as the forms of one and the same is not only present in the Upaniṣads, it is there in all the forms of mysticism that hold to a type of monism. The distinction between a Godhead and God is in Eckhart, Plotinus and other mystics also. Brahman, the ultimate Reality, when cast in logical moulds, and when brought into relation with other appearances, is called Iśvara. The concept is not without its function. The spiritual aspirant has to pass through the worship of God. Not by ignoring Iśvara but by transcending Him through worship is the way. If we ignore God, then there is the danger of our landing in materialism and Naturalism, and over asserting that the world is independent and self-caused. Advaita tradition holds that 'without the grace of God, not even an inclination towards the non-dualist frame of mind is possible'. The God of the Upaniṣads is the logical highest and Brahman is the intuitive highest. The concept of God does not slight the intellect nor scorn the wisdom of ages. 'The *saguna* Brahman is not the mere self-projection of yearning spirit or a floating air bubble. The gleaming ideal is the way in which the everlasting real appears to our human mind'. We have, according to Śaṅkara, in the Upaniṣads both Absolute and God.

Śaṅkara's interpretation of the Upaniṣads seeks to make another bold doctrine organic to its philosophy. Philosophy has to clarify the exact relation between the One and the Many. A unique relation is envisaged as obtaining between the Absolute and the rest of appearance. Theistic religions hold on to

the creationist hypothesis and describe God as the cause of all the things in the world. Another common mode explaining the relation between the one and the many is the doctrine of transformation. The ultimate cause transforms itself into the things of the world. Both these modes are not acceptable to Śaṅkara, for they are unintelligible and are beset with logical difficulties. So he traces or discovers a new mode of relation and finds support for it in the Upaniṣads. It is called *Vivarta-Vāda*. It is not a *relation* exactly, for it does not in reality relate Brahman to anything really real. It is the relation between a thing and its appearance. A thing appears as other than what it is. In twilight a piece of rope appears as the *snake*. The snake is the appearance of the rope. So is the world of Nature and world of souls mere appearance of Brahman. The effect, i.e., the appearance, is dependent on the cause. The cause is in no way affected by the effect. It is a one-sided causation. The absence of the cause leads to the absence of the effect. The effect is not of the same order of reality, as the cause. To the question why the cause appears as the effect, there is no answer except it does appear. The effect is unreal, though it is existent, objective and has practical utility. According to some orientalists this *vivarta-vāda* is the unique message of the Upaniṣads. Deussen writes that the prevailing doctrine of the Upaniṣads is pantheism and the fundamental doctrine is illusionism. Max Mueller clarifies the issues 'we must remember that the orthodox view of the Vedanta is not what we should call evolution but illusion. Evolution of Brahman or *parināma* is heterodox; illusion or Vivarta is orthodox Vedanta . . . To put it metaphorically the world according to orthodox Vedanta does not proceed from Brahman as a tree from a germ, but as a mirage from the rays of the Sun'. (S.B.E., XV. p. 27).

Some critics hold that the doctrine of Māyā or Vivarta is not found in the Upaniṣads and is what Śaṅkara reads into them or foists on them. Dr. Ranade answers the critic with a wise reflection. 'The doctrine of Māyā is

neither a falsification of Śaṅkara, nor merely the outcome of Buddhistic nihilism, nor found full-fledged in the Upaniṣads. The Upaniṣads felt the mystery of creation. They saw that the world cannot be real at the level of Brahman. And what they felt and saw, they expressed in their own way. Their ideas are given a systematic form by Śaṅkara and his followers. But on one point all the Upaniṣads are almost unanimous, namely, that ultimate Reality is of the nature of consciousness.'

Śaṅkara further points out that the Upaniṣads explain the identity of the individual soul and Brahman as not something to be produced but as something that is made known what is already there. The self is Brahman, He does not become Brahman, but is in nature

Brahman. This realization can be had here and now itself, in the embodied state itself, i.e. *jīvanmukti* (See *Gītā*, V. 19 and also *Chāndogya*, II. 23. 1). It is like the discovery of the treasure which is lying hidden under one's own feet, though one is passing over it again and again (*Chānd.*, VIII. 3. 2). Spiritual realization is not the privilege of a few. It is the birthright of all. The Upaniṣadic concept of *mokṣa* spells universal salvation (*sarva mukti*). The way for it is through Jñāna and renunciation and not through ritual and the *pravṛtti mārga*. One should get out of the feeling of false identification of the real with the unreal. Thus we see that Śaṅkara finds the treasure house of his doctrine in the Upaniṣads. His Advaita, in his own words, is a unified garland of the Upaniṣadic flowers.

## WHAT AILS THE MODERN WORLD ?

SWAMI GNANESWARANANDA

ARE we progressing towards realization of Truth, towards better understanding, deeper peace, and the knowledge of the spiritual value of things ? Or, are we getting more and more lost in the intricate labyrinth of Māyā ? This is what one asks, while watching the course of events and the general tendency of the human race.

Considering the problem from the standpoint of general material progress, no one can deny that humanity has achieved startling results in the course of the last two centuries. We have known things that were unknown to our ancient forefathers. We have gained control over many material forces, and this has placed us on a very advantageous ground for the enjoyment of life in general. But the questions that puzzles me are, 'Are we any nearer to perfection ? Do we stand any closer to the spiritual truth than our distant ancestors ? Are we more loving, more forgiving and truthful ? Do we of the modern age

really manifest spiritual qualities more than the ancients did ? '

The answers to these questions do not, in any way, appear to be such as would give us a very great degree of credit. One cannot help feeling a little pessimistic about it. Such pessimism seems to have troubled many thinkers, philosophers and poets, who have expressed it in various ways. The question boils down to, 'Why is it that we have attained so much in one respect, and seem to be going down in the other ? '

Some time ago I was discussing the Hindu theory of cycles with a group of young people. Incidentally, it will not be out of place to tell you something about this theory. Time is progressing in the form of cycles ; it has neither beginning nor end. Everything in creation emanates from an all-perfect and divine Principle, and evolves to its extreme state of manifestation. Finally, it returns to its original source of fundamental perfection.

This manifestation, or evolution, proceeds through four distinct cycles, or Yugas.

The first is the Satya-yuga, or the age of truth, during which virtue and spirituality occupy seventy-five per cent of the motive force of life. Gradually, Satya-yuga loses itself in the manifestation of Treta-yuga, or the second epoch. During this second epoch of manifestation the material side of nature becomes more perfect, but the intrinsic value of spirituality is lost. So that, during this age, spirituality and materialism as forces of life occupy the proportion of half-and-half. Next begins the third period of Dwapara, in which materialism makes further progress. Manifestation takes an extremely successful form, but again spirituality dwindles. In this age spirituality controls only about one-quarter of the entire motive-power; whereas, materialism occupies three-quarters. During the Dwapara epoch even that twenty-five per cent of spirituality gradually loses itself, and sinks into almost nothingness when the fourth epoch, which is called Kali-yuga, begins. The expression Kali-yuga has often been translated as the Iron Age.

As on one side materialism advances, and manifestation takes a more intricate form, spirituality, on the other, becomes less and less. Finally, the zenith of manifestation is attained. This means the completion of the entire cycle of evolution, when creation again comes home to its primal state of perfection, rest, and poise. This process is going on continuously. That is how creation goes on from eternity to eternity.

When I was explaining this theory of cycles to the group of young people, as I mentioned before, a bright young man raised the point that the theory seemed untenable, because it contradicted the modern theory of evolution. (He had accepted that theory as the final truth.) After some discussion he was able to understand that theory in a better way, in the light of this ancient Hindu theory of projection. In fact, this theory establishes the theory of evolution on a spiritual basis by pointing out the other side of the problem,

that evolution in one aspect does not necessarily mean progress in all aspects. In making a fundamental substance more intricate and complex in its manifestation, the intrinsic, basic qualities have always been found to become less and less.

Out of a definite quantity of pure gold you may manufacture different kinds of ornaments. You may make many attractive forms of intricate workmanship from that pure metal. But, gradually you will realize that you are getting the manifestations at the cost of the intrinsic quality and value of the original substance. The gold-value is diminishing at every step of the evolution of the beautiful jewelry. Likewise, it is an undeniable scientific fact, established by the Vedantic theory of Māyā that, as name and form progress Brahman, or the basic spiritual reality, seems to be less and less.

Applying this theory, the ancient Rishis concluded that creation, first of all, began from an absolute state of spiritual perfection. Before it became intricate the world naturally manifested the beauty of spiritual forces. Man was more spiritually-minded. At the beginning he was not so far advanced in materialism, but so far as his spiritual qualities were concerned they were intact. During the process of evolution Prakṛti, or matter, as man, manifested more and more power in the realm of phenomena. The manifestation of his inner divinity, however, became obstructed.

Māyā has been described as a kind of illusion which controls the evolution of name and form. It is Māyā which is building up all these pluralities from that one great Substance, Brahman. There is no evolution of the basic reality. It remains the same throughout the entire processes of manifestation. It is only Māyā which makes these changes appear.

However, to follow our simile, the more we advance in manifestation, the more we 'lose' our inner perfection. It is in the very nature of things. Should we denounce it or find fault with it? We should do neither. Manifestation is a fact, but we have to look farther

ahead, we have to look beyond it. It is not the manifestation that we want. But through that process we want to arrive at a state in which we will be able to realize the spiritual perfection and divinity of our starting point. We want to realize that even in the midst of a thousand intricacies of phenomenal expression.

If we do not lose sight of the intrinsic spiritual value of things, throughout all the manifestation, then there is no harm in material progress. Otherwise, we get lost in the maze of Māyā and it becomes difficult for an individual, a nation, or humanity at large, to find its way out of the labyrinth.

Why can we not maintain, side by side with materialism, our recognition of the spiritual values? Why can we not reconcile and harmonize these two factors, and build up a true civilization? If it is possible for any generation to lay out the foundation for such an achievement, I believe that the present one has the power and creative genius to do so. Kali-yuga is at its lowest ebb and the tide of Satya will again flood the world.

What is the general tendency of the age? We are advancing more and more in our understanding of nature. We are getting more and more control over many gigantic forces. But, are we in any way giving any scope to spiritual qualities? Does a spiritual man gain any recognition in this world, or is it only a person who commands material power who is considered successful, and worthy of praise?

The answer to this question shows which way the wind is blowing. It seems that the very slogan of today is, 'How much are you worth?' Whenever you want to know what a person is, the first thing you enquire about is how much money he has. The very idea — as if money can be the only criterion of one's worth — has shocked me! Suppose a donkey is laden with all the gold in the world. Would he be anything more than a donkey? Am I to believe, to be an up-to-date modern, that Buddha was a worthless man, Christ another, and so on? Do you call it culture or civilization when the string of power is

held by money, which the robber can make in plenty? Tell me, what do you consider the real worth? Is it only gold and silver? Is it only possessions and grandeur? If that is the case, let me stop here and tell you that certainly Mammon has swallowed us all and there is no hope for humanity! But I know that this is only a passing phase through which we are proceeding. Eventually, we will grow to appreciate spiritual values. The age of real understanding and spiritual progress is not far ahead of us.

Many people, especially pseudo-modernists, raise the question, 'Why divide reality into two airtight compartments, by separating spirituality and materialism?' They point out to the fact that people are still controlled by the old theological doctrine of a purely spiritual creation by God, and the frustration of the power of God by the creation of Satan. They hold that things belonging to the side of God are spiritual and those on the side of Satan are material. Such a theory no sane person can uphold. We are not talking about spirituality and materialism from any such standard. Reality can be understood wrongly, giving rise to false evaluation.

However, I would tell my ultra-modern friends that if they claim to be 'moderns' I claim to be a Vedantist (and a confirmed monist, at that), and my monism penetrates far deeper into the spirit than their conception of oneness. The unity of matter is subject to change, and thereby becomes many; whereas, my monism being of the spirit is retained all throughout the process of evolution. As a Vedantist I cannot ignore the theory of Māyā. I know there is only one Principle which is manifestation itself, and I know very well that there is no hard and fast distinction between materialism and spirituality. But, for no reason, can I ignore the distinction between ignorance and illumination, and between right and wrong estimation of values. The very same reality can be understood and accepted wrongly, through the influence of ignorance. If I condemn or

criticize anything, I condemn this spirit of false appraisal.

Distinction is not in the nature of the thing. It lies in the fact of how we accept it. Māyā is in the heart of humanity, and as long as it rules supreme there will always remain a distinction between spirituality and materialism. When, by spiritual understanding, ignorance is overcome, all distinctions will vanish and everything will be spiritual. The haze of Māyā has to be removed before we can recognize the presence of that One.

However, let us continue our main topic of discussion. Suppose there is a successful business man. He is clever and expert in his line. He has acquired a lot of money and position and even, perhaps, fame. But, suppose he is an oppressor and has no respect for honesty and truth. I ask my modernist friends, 'Do you call such a man an ideal person? Is he your model of success? If not, why not? What does he lack?' He may be very good as far as his material achievements are concerned, but you cannot accept a person as ideal by the material standard alone. If matter thrives at the cost of spirit, it is a false growth.

Apply this illustration to the collective world. Can we not say that the same thing has happened to humanity? Humanity has attained cleverness, skill, and abundance in the realm of matter. But the spirit has been kept starved. We have invented wonderful machines, we have attained great success in the advancement of the general condition of man. But have we achieved corresponding success in the healthy growth of the spiritual faculties? If not, it is a matter of deep regret, and it has to be corrected. Otherwise, humanity will bring about its own destruction because materialism, if not guided by spirituality, can only run amuck and create tensions and wars which will lead to annihilation.

We should remember that truth is above all things. It does not pay homage to any society. You cannot say that truth was one thing a thousand years ago, but different today. The fundamental truth remains one

and the same, yesterday, today and tomorrow. It is not truth that has to adjust itself with our changing conditions. It is *we* who have to harmonize our so-called progress with the truth. What I mean is this: You will find that there is a tendency with modern people to bring down truth to suit their needs. They want to remantle it to suit their condition. That is a great fallacy. Conditions must be so adjusted that the highest truth becomes manifest in and through them. An institution or a society where truth cannot be practised is diseased, and doomed to destruction.

'Honesty is the best policy,' is an old saying. A modern would say, 'Oh, it used to be so, a thousand years or so ago when man was less complex. But today we must have a different maxim of life. Life now is far different than in those days!' Shall we say, then, that dishonesty is the best policy? I think most of you would hesitate to accept that.

No one can deny the fact that society has so grown that it has become very difficult for strictly honest and truthful people to make a good living, not to speak of gaining prominence. But conditions must change or everything will come tumbling down, like a great structure without a foundation.

We need not deny the value of all the beautiful things in modern civilization, but we should be concerned about their welfare. They cannot stand for long without a spiritual foundation. Civilization stands like a beautiful castle, but without any base. It is bound to topple down. We are already seeing signs of this. Why is there so much discontent and trouble in the world? People complain about economic, social and political conditions. But these are only indications of a deeper malady. The main disease lies in the lack of spiritual vitality of the human organism. There are many people who have no particular grounds for complaint. Although they have money, health, youth, and so on, still something is missing in them. They do not know what it is, but they are unhappy. What do you think is missing? They are driven from one place

to another, having no anchorage of life. What could make them happy? In other words, what is that which can give us lasting happiness and satisfaction?

'There cannot be any satisfaction in the finite. In the limitless alone is happiness,' declares the Upaniṣad. The understanding of the spiritual reality, the realization of your inner divinity, knowing the fact that you do not depend upon anything for your existence, happiness or knowledge, that is what will make you calm, happy and satisfied. When you realize that truth, your life is based on the rock-foundation of spirituality. This has to be attained, both in the individual as well as the collective life of man. Unless and until we find the motive-force of our life in that spiritual Principle we will not be happy or satisfied, no matter how many more material possessions we gain. Satisfaction comes from the realization of the spiritual truth, and if human life is worth anything it is valuable for this reason—it gives us the opportunity of knowing our higher spiritual self.

Through the experiences of life, in wealth, power, enjoyment or love, one learns to appreciate the value of spiritual things. If one goes into material objects without a spiritual background of discrimination, one's thirst only increases. The modern world is sinking more and more into the mire of materialism. Material comfort and power are good only when, by going through them, you know their limitations and learn to appreciate the value of a higher spiritual life. Otherwise, they lead you through the darkest labyrinth towards misery and more misery.

There is a beautiful poem written by Tulasidas, about three hundred years ago. In this verse he forecasts the modern spirit: how through materialism man loses the truth. I give you a very free translation of the verse:

Oh, what a pity that in this age of Kali  
If you worship the truth you will be kicked about  
By your fellow men and women.  
The Siren of Falsehood lures the whole world,  
People exert their utmost to find out  
Where liquor is sold

While pure milk has to go begging from  
door to door!  
The robber is a man of position and power,  
The honest have to endure all pain and contempt.  
Oh, Iron Age, mighty is thy magic!  
I bow down to thee—from a safe distance!  
As I look at thee, it makes me weep and laugh  
In the very same breath!

This description applies very well to society all over the world today. But what is the remedy? We have been discussing only the problems. What is the way out of this predicament? I do not believe that one can grow spiritually by hating material progress. I have known people who have turned violent reactionaries. As a consequence of disability or disappointment they hate materialism and dislike any signs of wealth. But such an attitude does not lead them anywhere near spiritual understanding. There should be a harmony between spirituality and materialism.

Hindu philosophy presents a plan, which, to my mind, is the only way out of this difficulty we are in. There are four Vargas, or items of achievement, to be proportionately attained in the course of one's life. They are Dharma, Artha, Kāma and Mokṣa.

First of all, a person must discipline himself with the achievement of Dharma. Dharma means spiritual values. It means religion, it means unselfishness, truth, justice, sympathy and love. It means everything that is good and uplifting. In order to understand what is good and bad and to recognize spiritual values, the first thing that one must learn to appreciate is Dharma. Dharma is the first lesson a child should assimilate with its kindergarten lessons. Dharma puts man on a solid foundation. After attaining that, let him go into any kind of material manifestation, he will never be lost.

Only when Dharma has been attained is a person competent to go into the second item, of Artha. Artha means wealth and the comforts that life can bring. But until Dharma has been attained no amount of wealth and enjoyment can elevate man in the slightest degree.

The third item is, Kāma, which means desires. In the case of many it has been found that by nipping desires in the bud one doesn't get out of them. One cannot get rid of them that way. By checking and suppressing desires one does not control them. Most of humanity have to go through desires and have to come out as masters, instead of letting desires oppress them forever.

Let a person who has acquired Dharma and Artha fulfil his legitimate desires. But beware that your desires do not deprive any one else of his desires ! After you have gone through the stage of Kāma you will discover that there is no satisfaction in material enjoyment. You will realize that you are following a mirage. Then you will begin to appreciate spiritual values. Then you enter into a real spiritual life, which is consummated in the fourth item, called Mokṣa, or absolute freedom, liberation.

Let me repeat this plan again. First you enter into the disciplines of Dharma. Then, after attaining that, you go to the second stage of life, Artha, or the acquisition of wealth. By going through the third stage of Kāma, the fulfilment of legitimate desires, you become awakened to the value of spiritual life. Last of all, you become firmly fixed in the life of Mokṣa, which is freedom from all bondages. When you 'sandwich' Artha and Kāma between Dharma and Mokṣa, you attain the highest type of life. You know that you cannot sacrifice your Dharma for anything in this world, and you also know that your highest goal is Mokṣa. With these two principles at the beginning and the end, let humanity go towards material progress and everything will be all right.

This is a very practical theory on which the system of education for the present as well as the future generations should be based. Let babies drink the principles of Dharma with their mothers' milk. Let them acquire a love of freedom from all bondages and a future generation of super men and women will spring up and will establish the kingdom of peace,

plenty and justice on this earth. But we must be up and doing. We must realize the need of upholding Dharma in our daily lives.

Let us keep a firm footing on the spiritual value of life and raise the spiritual standard. That will place us in a better position to enjoy wealth and fulfil desires. Let us be convinced that, in this world of enjoyment, there is no satisfaction in being a slave to matter. It is only when we rise above all kinds of dependence, and find our liberty, that we can enjoy a state of undisturbed happiness and peace.

It is not that we do not understand these things. We do understand. The trouble is that we do not have the initiative and courage to bring it into practice. We are all waiting for the tide to come in. When the tide comes it will turn us over, we think. But how is the tide coming at all, if we do not help it to come ? Do not wait for the tide to turn you, but be the instrument, yourself, to turn the tide. Let me tell you that it is by doing things individually, each according to his own capacity, that the tide is turned. When the individual neglects his share of the work nothing can happen in the collective world.

Once there was a king who had the whim of having a lake of milk. He had a spot dug up and declared, throughout his kingdom, that his subjects should come on a certain night, each with one bottle of milk to pour into the 'lake'. The people did not mind this whim of their king, for each could afford a bottle of milk. But, here was one, Tom, thinking, what difference will it make if only I do not take milk for the king's lake ? What if I take a bottle of water instead ? Dick and Harry also were thinking the same thing. So when the time came it was discovered that there was not one drop of milk in the lake !

We all know that we should have a better spiritual outlook on life. But what have we been doing to get that ideal of ours fulfilled ? The greatest trouble of our time is not one of a political nature. Fundamentally, it is not even one of an economic unbalance, nor is it social, racial, or international. It is one of *spiritual bankruptcy*. We, as individuals, have

lost the foundation of spirituality. Consequently, from the very roots, the signs of disease and imperfection are being manifested in every branch of the tree of life, individually as well as collectively. If we take care of our own selves, if we make spiritual principles the main foundation of our lives, we will find

that the tendency of the entire world will change. A civilization will arise which will unite all the attainments of material progress, as in a wonderful symphony, having for its dominant note the understanding, acceptance and realization, more and more, of the spiritual value of life.

### PARAMĀRTHASĀRA (Continued from page 498)

**REPLY :** Words function in a twofold way in conveying their sense, viz., primarily and figuratively. The words with primary meaning again are divided into two classes : conventional (*rūdha*) and derivative (*yaugika*). For instance, where the word is understood only through the age-old traditional usage it is called conventional, as words like *go* (cow). Where only the meaning of the component part of a word conveys its sense it is called derivative, e.g., *pānkaja*, (lotus). [Here it may be pointed out that according to the *Siddhānta Muktāvali* the varieties of words can be divided into not two but four, viz., *rūdha* (conventional), *yaugika* (derivative), *yoga-rūdha* (derivatively conventional) and *yaugika-rūdha* both derivative and conventional. The examples given are *go* (cow) or *maṇḍala* (circle), *pācaka* (cook), *pānkaja*, *ubhid*, respectively.]

As words denoting the primary sense are of different varieties so too the words conveying the figurative meaning are of two types : the metaphorical (*gauni*) and the implicatory (*lākṣāṇikī*). For instance, where the denotative function of a word is to express only the main traits of the subject in comparison it is called metaphorical (*gauni*), e.g., Devadatta the lion, (*simho devadattah*). Where by the denotative function of the word its original meaning is either partially or totally lost and a different meaning is denoted by indication it is called implication (*lākṣāṇā*). When the primary meaning of a word is obstructed (becomes incompatible) then only there arises the cause and necessity of accepting the implicatory meaning. 'The general rule is, "when it is possible to accept the primary meaning of a word (in a particular context) it is not logically sound to adduce an implicatory sense to it".' Also, following a popular maxim, 'Even a fool does not act without a purpose', it is not proper to read meanings unnecessarily.

The implication (*lākṣāṇā*) is of three types : *jahallakṣāṇā*, *ajahallakṣāṇā* and *jahadajahallakṣāṇā*. Where the word totally loses its original meaning and acquires some other meaning it is called *jahallakṣāṇā*, as for example in the expression : 'There is a colony of herdsmen in the Ganga' (*Gaṅgāyām ghosah prativasati*). [Here the words 'in the Ganga' (*gaṅgāyām*) imply only the bank of the river and not the stream.]

Where, however, without losing the original meaning the word implies a different sense related to that word it is termed as *ajahallakṣāṇā*, e.g., 'Kuntās are entering'. Here Kuntās mean the people from the city or state of Kunti.

Where a part of the original meaning of the word is discarded and at the same time some of its nature is indicated it is said to be the figure of speech called *jahadajahallakṣāṇā*, as in the expression : 'That Devadatta is this'.

Here the words 'that' and 'this' denote the Devadatta alone, leaving out the two different occasions and places which 'that' and 'this' indicate. Though Brahman cannot be denoted by the primary and figurative of the three denotative functions of words, there being no generic attributes and action in Brahman, yet implication known as *jahadajahallakṣāṇā* somehow becomes applicable to it.

## QUESTION : How ?

REPLY : That which indisputably exists is called in the world of experience as 'Satya'. Satya in common parlance is used with regard to ether (ākāśa) etc., but it is applicable in a real sense to the Ātman. In the former instance the directly expressed meaning of the word 'Satya' denotes the indwelling Consciousness characterized by ether and the like. Likewise in the expression 'satyam, jñānam, anantam brahma' the word 'satyam' by the directly expressed meaning indicates only the indwelling Consciousness, discarding the limitations such as ākāśa and the like. Similarly jñāna means that which has the power of illuminating. In ordinary experience it is found to be in the modifications, the intellect undergoes, in the form of pot, etc., but in truth it is of the inner Self alone. Therefore the primary meaning of jñāna applies to the inner Self, characterized by the modifications of the intellect. Here (in the above scriptural context) leaving out the modifications part of it, the word jñāna implies the inner Self. Likewise in the world of experience some modification of the mind, which arises due to some past good deed and makes one enjoy sense pleasure or feel blessed in having attained an objective, is called bliss ; in reality, however, the inner Self is meant by the word bliss.

In the sentence *vijñānam ānandam brahma* the word ānanda is used in the primary sense. But discarding the part of the meaning which refers to mental modifications, the word indicates only the cognitive part of it (i.e. cognizer). Similarly, the word infinite (anantam) is also to be construed. There is no lack of this type of implication in the world. This is obvious in the expressions like 'Brightly shining is the moon', 'Big bellied form is the pot', which expressions are answers to questions : 'In this sky which is the moon?' 'In these varieties of shapes of clay which is a pot?' Here, in these answers, by the words 'brightly shining' and 'big-bellied', discarding the generic properties of brightness and effulgence in the former and particularity of 'big-belliedness' in the latter case the moon and a particular pot are implied. If it were not so then the replies would be incongruous like telling about *kovidara* (a genus of trees), when asked to tell about the mango.

Similarly, here too, in the sentence, 'brahmavid āpnoti param', 'A knower of Brahman attains the highest,' the enquiry being as to what forms the characteristic of Brahman, it naturally follows that the words 'Satya' etc., are used in respect of Brahman Itself. The same argument holds good in the case of those other Vedantic statements which are engaged in finding out the meaning of the words 'that' (तत्) and 'thou' (तत्त्वम्). For instance, in the great dicta, like 'That art thou', the usage is similar to the expression 'That Devadatta is this'. Here by 'that' the Devadatta seen at a certain place and at a certain past time is primarily meant, whereas by the word 'this', the Devadatta who is seen at the present time and place. If these two meanings are taken separately it is not possible to convey the identity of the person indicated, as identity cannot be established in respect of 'that' time and place and 'this' time and place. Therefore, in both cases discarding the qualifying 'time and place', Devadatta alone is denoted by implication in the expression 'He alone is this'. Similar is the use of the words 'That' and 'Thou'; 'That' in the original expressed meaning stands for Iśwara who is endowed with attributes like omniscience etc., whereas 'thou' for the jīva characterized by nescience etc. There is no possibility of achieving identity between the two as they are of opposite natures. So by leaving out omniscience etc., from the word 'that', the non-dual consciousness alone, and discarding nescience etc., from the word 'thou' the immediate consciousness alone, are implied and thus their identity is related. Therefore, there is no incongruity in Vedanta's being engaged in describing Brahman.

DOUBT : Not so. Some say that in the world what is secondarily implied can be known through other valid cognitions, (as in the statement

'herdsman's colony in the Ganga', where Ganga means the bank of Ganga) and is itself the express sense of some other word. But the same thing cannot be said about Brahman, as such distinctions cannot be made in It. Therefore implication is not possible.

**REPLY :** It is not a sound argument. For validity only is the purpose of implication and not valid cognition (*pramāna*), there being absence of pure distinction between the two. Absence of implication can nowhere be seen in the case of a thing somehow established, merely because it has not been established by valid cognition. Here Brahman being self-effulgent and self-established what is lost because it is not established by *pramāna*? Neither does implication fall through because that word does not have an express meaning of some other word. It is also seen in the world of experience that by implication a meaning that cannot be otherwise expressed is conveyed. As for instance, in the expression 'sugar-cane is sweet', 'molasses are sweet', 'milk is sweet', the specific sweetness of each is implied, though this specific sweetness cannot be distinctly expressed by any word. Kumarila Bhatta says : 'There is a great difference in the sweetness of sugar-cane, milk and molasses yet the difference cannot be expressed even by the goddess of Learning'.

इष्टु क्षीर गुडादीनां माधुर्यं स्यान्तरं महत् । तथापि न तदाख्यातुं सरखत्यापि शक्यते ।

**QUESTION :** Even so, if I ask what is implied by the words 'Satyam', etc., in the scriptures, what will you reply ?

**ANSWER :** That which is within you, the questioner, in me, the replier, as also in all embodied beings, but not limited by the body, that is implied by 'Satyam' etc. Its nature can be known through one's own experience like the subtle differences in taste of sugar-cane and milk.

Now, it is not an error to speak about Brahman merely because it cannot be definitely assessed as 'nothing but this'. Also enough of this much incoherent talk, that Brahman being self-established needs no enquiring into.

## THE ETERNAL QUERY

JAYAMANI

Who is it that decks each flower and tree  
With radiant hues, resplendent beauty ?  
Shapes into countless forms all we see  
Of animate life and sky and sea ?.  
Oh Thou, whose genius all worlds acclaim  
Unrivalled Artist ! hast Thou no name ?

Oh countless the worlds that move thro' space  
Whose is the hand that holds them in place ?  
What is that magic, no science can teach ?

What that mystery, no knowledge can reach ?  
In wonder we gaze at all we see,  
What art Thou, Unscrutable Mystery ?

Whose fingers tune this rhythm of life,  
Echoing thro' aeons 'midst joy and strife ?  
Whose, the silent voice that bids us rise  
And reach the bliss beyond the skies ?  
Thou to whom all universe doth bow,  
Maker Supreme ! where oh ! where art Thou ?

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### IN THIS ISSUE

This is the second instalment of "The Teachings of Sri Ramakrishna". Sri Akshay Kumar Sen was a householder-disciple of the Master.

Swami Nityabodhananda, an ex-Editor of the *Vedanta Kesari*, is now the head of the Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre, Geneva, Switzerland.

Sri R. Ramakrishnan, M.A., L.T., is the Headmaster, N. N. R. High School, Nangavaram, Trichy Dt.

Sri Radhey Shyam Rastogi, M.A., LL.B., is an

ex-Assistant Professor of English, Lucknow University.

Dr. P. Nagaraja Rao, M.A., D.Litt., is a retired Professor of Philosophy of the Venkateswara University, Tirupati.

Swami Gnaneswarananda was the founder-leader of the Vedanta Society of Chicago. The present article forms the text of a lecture delivered by him on May 15, 1932 and has been made available to us by Mrs. Mallika Clare Gupta, a disciple of the Swami, now living in India.

Smt. Jayamani is from Hyderabad.

### ANOTHER YEAR COMES TO AN END

With this issue the *Vedanta Kesari* completes its 53rd year of service in the cause of religion, in the understanding of other faiths, and the dissemination of the idea of acceptance of all faiths as pathways to the same Reality.

Last year we had fervently hoped that we will be able to maintain the subscription at its previous rate if only there was a larger circulation. With that idea in view we had appealed to the subscribers to enrol such of their friends as would be interested in the journal. Though there was some response it was not adequate to meet the rising costs. We had to enhance the subscription rate with effect from July 1966 for all new subscribers and the renewals which fell due after the revised rates. We presume, our subscribers will not mind this slight rise in the rates and continue to be on our mailing

list. May we again appeal to each one of you if you have been benefited by reading the journal — to enlist at least one subscriber?

We thank all our subscribers, contributors, advertisers, and other readers for their sustained interest in the journal.

Our usual special number which was to be in the month of May 1967 has now been postponed to June due to unavoidable circumstances. So the May issue will be with the subscribers in the first week of May.

We are glad to inform the readers that the 'Memoirs of Swami Adbhutananda' which were serially published in our pages will soon be printed in book form.

The first page serial, *Paramārthasāra* could not be completed within the year, as we had hoped, for want of space, therefore it will be concluded in the next number of the journal.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**VIVEKANANDA: A BIOGRAPHY IN PICTURES:** Published by Advaita Ashrama, 5, Dehi Entally Road, Calcutta-14. 1966. Pages 118. Price: Rs. 30.

The Advaita Ashrama deserve our heartiest gratitude for bringing out this excellent volume containing almost all the pictures of Swami Vivekananda available to-date and the places and persons intimately associated with him. The brief biography of the Swami in seven chapters interspersed in between the pictures, as well as the appropriate quotations from or about the Swami inserted by the side of the pictures, provide the necessary background for an understanding and appreciation of the group of pictures that follow. The chapter on the Rama-krishna Movement and the Chronological Table of the main events of Swamiji's life together with the explanatory notes on the pictures about the time and place where they were taken, add to the value of the publication. No praise can be too high for this beautiful work, which compares favourably with standard western publications of a similar type in format, get-up, and selection and arrangement of the materials. Well-planned and well executed as the book is, the readers are sure to be richly rewarded.

A suggestion for the next edition: It would be better to incorporate, without marring the aesthetic quality of the book, the quotations, by the side of the pictures, into the body of the main life-sketch so that the entire matter reads as a continuous narrative. As it is, there is a big gap between the different chapters, which obstructs the continuity in reading, so much so that every time we reach a new chapter, we are put to the necessity of looking back where the previous chapter ended.

SWAMI KIRTIDANANDA.

**GOLDEN JUBILEE SOUVENIR OF THE RAMA-KRISHNA MISSION STUDENTS' HOME, Belgharia, Calcutta-56.** Pp. 168.

The Souvenir in its preface recalls to memory the very humble beginning with which the Home started functioning in 1916. In the Souvenir we will find articles depicting not only the growth of the Ashrama, the vicissitudes it had to pass through and its present activities but also papers on topics of burning interest of the day such as "Youth Unrest in India", the 'Place of religion in Education' etc. The Souvenir is profusely illustrated to convey an idea about the activities of the Home in brief, even at a casual glance.

**SRI VISHNU SAHASRANAMAM:** Translated by K. E. Parthasarathy, Ganesh & Co. (Madras) Private Ltd., Madras-17. Pp. 363. Price: Rs. 12.

The Vishnu Sahasranama occupies a pivotal place in our religious literature and shares with the Valmiki *Ramayana* the glory and distinction of having been recited before the very Lord Himself. Its appeal has been universal, and it was not without significance that votaries of both *Nirguna* and *Saguna* Brahman had set much store by it. The commentaries of Sankara and Parasara Bhattar attest to this strikingly. The author has translated both the commentaries for every *nama* or name. Relevant extracts from other holy Puranas have also been inserted in appropriate places. It is interesting to observe that although the two commentaries differ radically in the connotation of not a few of the *namas*, nos. 163, 164, 185, 201, 222, 513, 518, there are many instances of both of them interpreting some of them in the same way.

To those who have been making a mechanical repetition of the *namas*, it is a revelation how each one of them possesses an esoteric meaning of its own, whose implication according to both these holy commentators, open new vistas of the many-sided approaches in Hindu religion and philosophy.

S. RAJAGOPALAN.

**KALIDASA:** Publications Division, Ministry of Information, Delhi-6. Pp. 52. Price: 0.75 P.

This is a collection of eight broadcast talks on the genius and creations of one of our greatest poets, who had lived at a time when the ideal of life embodied in the fourfold scheme of Purusharthas and Asramas had been prominent, (P. 13), with a happy blending of the secular and spiritual values of life (*ibid*). There is something in his works for everyone to feel as his own (P. 15) and even today, there is hardly a cultivated language in the world into which Kalidasa has not been translated. The several speakers have done ample justice to the poet and his scintillating poetry. This little book is admirably suited to introduce the reader to the heritage of everlasting value which he has left behind. Kalidasa was not a mere epicurean. Even his love-play *Sakuntala* as well as *Kumara-sambhava*, lay stress on Tapasya and devotion. His final benediction in the former play attests his preference to "Gnana Marga" (P. 48).

One hopes that a similar monograph may be prepared for India's Adi Kavi Valmiki, to whom

Kalidasa himself was indebted in no small measure, both for his major themes and for his similes.

S. RAJAGOPALAN.

INDIA: A Reference Annual 1966. Publications Division, Ministry of Information, Delhi-6. Pp. 592+92. Price: Rs. 6.50.

This reference Annual with many new features, maintains the exhaustiveness and excellence of its predecessors. Priced cheap, it should be in the hands of everyone as an authentic re-statement of all that one need to know about our country.

S. RAJAGOPALAN.

KINDLE THE LIGHT: By T. L. Vaswani. Gita Publishing House, 10, Sadhu Vaswani Path, Poona-1. Pp. 157. Price: Rs. 2.

This well brought out and low-priced treatise, assembles the soul-shining messages and sayings of a mystic of our times, who had preached a life of renunciation. His vision was broad-based and his "great family" consisted of his "younger brothers and sisters" — "the animals and birds" (109). His philosophy embraced also the tenets of every other School in this country and abroad, and that gives his utterances catholicity and universality. They are doubtless a source of delight.

S. RAJAGOPALAN.

THE GANDHI STORY: (A pictorial representation) By S. D. Sawant, S. D. Badalkar. Publications Division, Ministry of Information, Delhi-6. Pp. 47. Price: Rs. 2.50.

This unique publication, tells the story of Gandhiji in pictures with copious extracts from his autobiography and other writings, including a few letters of his in facsimile. It is really a feast to the eye. The most heart-warming details of the Mahatma's mission, presented in a very attractive garb, enliven and enlighten the reader.

S. RAJAGOPALAN.

INDIAN SYSTEMS OF WRITING: Publications Division, Ministry of Information, Delhi-6. Pp. 44. Price: Re. 1.

This is a collection of the Broadcast talks by distinguished scholars and Indologists of our country, on the origin and development of the various scripts in India. The Brahmi script, it is claimed, had been the earliest, and it had been the parent of the Nagari and other provincial scripts in this country. A study of this brochure ought to convince everyone that there had been an underlying unity, amidst the apparent diversity of the various scripts, pointing out to the emotional integration of the country even in the

distant past, as one of the contributors has remarked (P. 22). The growth of flowers and leaves of different sizes and shapes on the same tree does not indicate them as independent entities because they spring from the same soil and root.

S. RAJAGOPALAN.

1. FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS: By M. Venkatarangayya. Pp. 66. Price: Re. 1.00.
2. SOCIAL CHANGE IN INDIA SINCE INDEPENDENCE: Pp. 18. Price: 0.30 P.
3. HINDU LAW REFORM: Published by Publications Division, Ministry of Information, Delhi. Pp. 46. Price: 0.65 P.

These pamphlets are well written and well conceived. The first is a valuable monograph on the subject by a veteran scholar and recounts in simple language, the intricacies of the process and procedure of elections. The second records the various measures taken by the state in the post-independent era for the economic and social regeneration of the country, and it is justly claimed that there has been amongst the people, a measure of self discipline and social consciousness, attributable to the various steps taken in that behalf by the administration.

Codification of Hindu Law has been a major achievement of our Government. An important branch of it relates to Marriage. This brochure succinctly and clearly analyses the various statutory provisions, and is of invaluable help to the common citizen.

S. RAJAGOPALAN.

#### MALAYALAM

1. PASCHATYA PARYATANAM: By Swami Vivekananda. Pp. 150+viii. Price: Rs. 2.
2. SRI SANKARACHARYA CARITAM: By P. Seshadri. Pp. 158+vi. Price: Rs. 2.
3. BHARATA PARIKARAMANAM: By Swami Siddhinathananda. Pp. 166+viii. Price: Rs. 2. All published by Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Vilangan, P.O. Puranattukara, Trichur.

The first book is a translation of Swami Vivekananda's "Memoirs of European Travel" which were addressed to Swami Trigunatitananda, Editor of *Udbodhan*, the Bengali journal. These were first published in the above journal. They were written in a light humorous style in Bengali. Swami Vivekananda therein describes the civilization, life and customs of the Occidentals. Swamiji's sympathy for humanity as a whole and his own countrymen in particular is perceptible here as in his other works. The pub-

lishers deserve our thanks for bringing this particular portion of Swamiji's works in the form of a separate booklet.

The second book is an original work by the author Shri P. Seshadri. In this biography he has briefly touched upon all the incidents in the life of the great Acharya as also his works. It gives an idea as to how Sri Sankara propagated the doctrine of Advaita throughout India. The description of the establishment of the four centres in the four corners of the country for the continuance of his message is also given. It is a valuable addition to the spiritual and religious literature in Malayalam.

The third booklet is a travelogue of the author, wherein he deals with many places of religious and cultural interest, especially of the North. The historical importance of these places as well as other aspects, such as their present problems and their solutions are also dealt with in this book. It can be a travel guide too, for the places mentioned therein. The customs and traditions of the people of various states have been carefully noted down and the reader feels as if he is travelling with the author, so vivid and apt are the descriptions.

MALATI KERALA VARMA.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### SRI RAMAKRISHNA MATH, MADRAS-4

#### BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS OF BHAGAVAN SRI RAMAKRISHNA

The birthday Tithipuja of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna was observed at Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore on the 13th March 1967. The celebration began with *Mangalarati* in the shrine at 5 a.m. and was followed by devotional songs, Vedic Chanting, reading of the Chandi, Bhagavadgita and the Upanishads. The special puja (which also included *Homa*) began at 7 a.m. and culminated with *Arati* at 12-30 p.m. About 900 devotees were given *Prasad* in hand.

In the evening after *Arati* in the shrine there was reading on the life of Sri Ramakrishna followed by talks by Swami Paramatmananda and Swami Kailasananda, till 9-30 p.m.

The public celebration which came off on the 19th March 1967 was held at the VIVEKANANDA HALL of Sri Ramakrishna Math. It began with *Harikatha* on Govinda *Pattabhishekam* at 3-15 p.m. by Brahmasri T. S. Balakrishna Sastrigal.

The public meeting began at 5-30 p.m. with songs, and Vedic invocation. Swami Kailasananda welcomed the President of the meeting Sri M. S. Sarangapani Mudaliar, B.A., B.L., Commissioner, Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments, Madras, the Tamil speaker Sri A. S. Gnana-sambandam, Secretary, Bureau of Tamil Publications, the English speaker Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan, Director, Centre of Advanced Study in Philosophy, University of Madras, and the audience. After the welcome speech there was recitation by some of the prize winners in the recita-

tion competition held by Sri Ramakrishna Mission Boys' High School, Thyagarayanagar, in this connection.

Sri A. S. Gnana-sambandam and Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan spoke on the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna in Tamil and English respectively for about an hour and a half. The prizes to the winners in the competition were distributed at this stage. The President of the meeting then spoke for about half an hour and the meeting came to a close with thanksgiving by Sri S. K. Sivaraman at 8-05 p.m.

There was bhajan in the Math Hall after 8-15 p.m. for about 40 minutes, with which the celebrations were concluded.

### SRI RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA SALEM

#### REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1965-66

The activities of the Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Salem consist in holding regular classes on Sundays, celebration of birth anniversaries of Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi, and Swami Vivekananda, daily worship and prayers. It also has a Library and Reading Room, and a Charitable Dispensary with a ward of six beds. The total number of patients treated during the year was 38,070 of which 19,585 were new cases.

The immediate needs of the Ashrama are funds for the renovation of the old Shrine, for which the Managing Committee appeals to the public to contribute liberally. It also thanks all donors, and well-wishers for all the help rendered to the Ashrama.

# THE VEDANTA KESARI

॥ नायमात्मा बलहीनेन लभ्यः ॥

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